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WHAT AND WHERE IS GOD?

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THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

WHAT AND WHERE IS GOD?

A HUMAN ANSWER TO THE DEEP RELIGIOUS CRY OF THE MODERN SOUL

BY

RICHARD LaRUE SWAIN, PH.D.

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1920

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Set up and electrotyped. Published, October, 1920

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TO THE LOVED ONES

OF MY FATHER'S FAMILY

AND

TO THE DEAR ONES

OF MY OWN FAMILY

SO TRULY A PART OF THESE PAGES

I GRATEFULLY

DEDICATE THIS BOOK

PREFACE

The foreground of this book has largely to do with the answering of vital questions that have sprung from the suffering souls of men and women with whom the author has been sympathetically associated. Considerable attention has been given to the natural sequence of these questions in order that the answers might form a more or less orderly line of discussion. While the method of answering a particular set of questions does not permit of a strictly logical treatment of the themes, yet in the background there is a definite and concrete picture of God, of the universe, and of man as he is enfolded in God's world.

The chapters on immortality contain a further discussion of God, man, and the universe as they move on in endless time. To know " what and where " God is, it is necessary to understand how man and the universe exist in God, and what God purposes to achieve through them.

If we are to reach people's minds, their questions are of supreme importance because they show where the mind is focused. The average person can, as a rule, proceed no farther with a subject until his main difficulty is removed. Therefore, we have preferred the question to the natural division of the subject, believing that the reader would be able to see the logic that is beneath it all.

The chapters on the Bible are not closely related to the rest of the book, but as the Scriptures contain the " specifications " and " blue-prints " from God, it seemed important to include a description of how we must approach them if we are not to misread their spiritual content.

Though the material of this volume has been given in extemporaneous addresses, yet no part of it has been reduced to writing until now. Its appearance in book form is in response to many requests. Especially helpful has been the encouragement of Professor Douglas Clyde Macintosh of Yale University who has kindly read the manuscript and made valuable suggestions.

R. L. S.

306 Golden Hill,
Bridgeport, Conn.

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WHAT AND WHERE IS GOD?

CHAPTER I

LOSING GOD, OR THE HONEST ATHEIST

Why does God leave His very existence in doubt by forever hiding Himself?

If there were a God would He not make Himself known in such a way that no one could possibly doubt His existence?

Why should we be expected to love and obey a God whose existence is still a subject of discussion?

Could a righteous and loving Father leave any of His children in doubt of His existence?

While I was dining one day with a young minister and his wife, the latter disclosed to me her religious state of mind. Said she:

"I have no God! They have taken Him āway and I do not know where to find Him. My childhood conception of a Man-God on a throne in heaven is gone — and I think rightly gone; but I have nothing to take its place. I hear them speak of an immanent God; of a God who fills all nature. And I have no objection to this except that it brings no relief. Nature is so inex-

pressibly vast and complex that, to my mind, a God who fills all nature is so infinitely big and spread out that I can neither know Him nor love Him. He is altogether too attenuated for me; besides, this makes Him so much everywhere that He seems to be nowhere. Here I am, without a God, working myself nearly to death in a great Church; and my heart is breaking for a Father to whom I can go, as I once did, with all my hopes and fears. Moreover, all my young women friends feel as I do. We often speak of this among ourselves without knowing where to turn for relief."

The distressing experience of this minister's wife is more common than many think. With her type of mind it was inevitable that she should experience doubt while passing from the crude to the mature. Being bright, consecrated, and sincere she had simply hastened the crisis. That the Church is not always present to take care of its own passengers when they arrive at these way-stations is the greater pity; because representatives of various spiritual inns will be sure to meet every incoming train. And if the Church is neglectful of its spiritual pilgrims, it compels them to spend their night of doubt in the depot or on a bench in the park exposed to the tender mercy of religious fakers. Were the difficulties of this minister's wife met, it would be a great blessing to her and to thousands of other troubled souls; and at the same time it would immeasurably enrich our common Christian life.

Because of our newly acquired knowledge of the physi-

cal universe multitudes, both without and within the Church, are asking *what* God is and *where* He is that they may find Him.

The poverty of faith and confusion of ideas concerning God were recently brought to light by Professor Leuba in his questionnaire. Many seem to think there is no place for God in their conception of the universe. Having no longer a satisfying idea of God, the thought of Him is fading from their minds. And while some rejoice in their scepticism, others deeply regret a waning faith.

All this only proves that the world is over-ripe for a finer conception of God and His universe; and that a better and more definite idea must be obtained, or doubt will run into positive unbelief. Modern learning is thought by many to be particularly hard on faith. Some of us, however, have found the world of modern knowledge more congenial to faith and much superior to the old unscientific world as a place in which to live the simple Christian life. This better vision should be given to the people with all possible speed. They should be taught to see that as boulevards and steel bridges are superior to mud roads and dangerous fords, so the new Christian highway is better than the old. Nevertheless, new knowledge in certain directions does present grave difficulties for those who retain crude conceptions of God and erroneous views of His relation to the forces of nature that envelop us. Until we do the work that our times demand of us, even Christians may not hope to remain

immune from the devastating influences of doubt. There is a deep cry in the modern soul that must be met.

While our hope of knowing God rests on His immanence yet the idea of immanence has not been sufficiently clarified to meet our practical demands. If we continue to teach the beautiful doctrine that God is everywhere, in the vague way that is now so prevalent, an ever increasing number will surely come to believe that He is nowhere.

Lovingly and faithfully our mothers taught us that God was everywhere in all majesty and power. But it was different. They believed that God had a form, or nucleus, in heaven, and that His spirit radiated from this form to the remotest particles of matter in the universe. They also believed that when transported at death to His central abode they should look with rapture upon His ineffable being. They expected to see the glorious presence of the Father distinct from the glorified body of Jesus. In their thought, the visible Jesus was literally on the right hand of a visible Father. However, this conception of a visible and localized God in heaven is either gone or going; and for the average mind there remains a Deity, if any, as attenuated as stellar ether, and scarcely more personal than the forces of nature. No one ever made a more rational demand than the minister's wife when she asked for a particular God to supplement a universal God.

We must get on common ground with our fellows, if we really wish to help, and sow our seed in the soil of living minds. The supreme need of the hour is for someone to help the masses to move out of the old "shack"

of an unscientific world into God's beautiful, expanding palace. Though some new frames are needed for the old pictures, yet no treasure should be left to perish in the old "shack"; because the ampler world of modern knowledge will never be home until the pictures of our childhood hang on the wall and the fire burns in the furnace. The larger abode of a scientific universe is a veritable prison when we have cast out the God of our fathers. But whether we would or not, we must learn to do business in the new world; and sooner or later we shall learn that we can not do business in one kind of a universe and foster religion in another. Religion must thrive in the new world or perish. Neither is it enough for a few scholars to see their way in the new order; they must show others how to be religious without stultifying their intellects. In other words, men must see before a religious appeal can reach their conscience.

There are as many ways of becoming a sceptic as there are of becoming a Christian. We must admit, however, that careless living has multiplied the difficulties of faith for every one of us. And yet, a sincere effort to make religion real in one's own personal experience often hastens unbelief. Those who think that no one honestly doubts the existence of God have a poor knowledge of the facts; because, in many minds, this is the only serious doubt. If only they could make this point secure, everything else would fall in line as a matter of course. To a singular degree this has been true in my own case. The one word "God" is a creed large enough to burst all

little worlds, if the word stands for a fact which has any worthy meaning. Some people, always wondering whether God is good to them, or whether He really thinks of them at all, are greatly shocked if some one else doubts God's existence. Whereas, to believe in Christ's God and at the same time doubt His goodness is a flat contradiction. For many of us this would be impossible.

Following the advice of friends — whose judgment I trust — I venture to give a simple history of my own early religious life. This is for the sake of finding a point of contact with those who have little or no faith; and with the hope of stating some of the real problems. Some may think this a dangerous thing to do. But unless we know the problems of suffering souls, how are we to solve them? Besides, the knowledge of another's difficulty with its solution, should enrich the faith of one having no serious difficulties of his own; and certainly it would make him more useful among people differently constituted from himself.

My father became a Protestant at twenty years of age to the great distress of his Roman Catholic mother. At twenty-two he married Sarah Elizabeth Carr of Great Dalby, England. They were married in the quaint old church of the town by the Episcopal rector. Later, my father preached in England for the Wesleyans. However, on coming to America in 1857 he identified himself with the United Brethren and remained with them until his death. As he located in what was then the frontier of this country, I can duplicate out of my own

life much that is to be found in " Black Rock " and " Sky Pilot." In the midst of much irreligion, my parents put vital religion into the very marrow of my bones.

Going far and near to preach in little schoolhouses, my father left us much alone in the old log cabin of one room; especially in the winter season when he preached nearly every night. His home-coming about once a month was a great event. In the summertime he would ride thirty miles on Sunday, preach three times, and be back home Monday by one o'clock to delve into every kind of rough work as a true frontiersman. I pity the little boy who has never had the privilege of rifling a pair of saddlebags on the return of his father. Sometimes my father was detained on his way home by overflowing rivers that were too mad for the horse to swim. And once he was detained by watching all night to prevent a rough gang from hanging one of his dearest friends. The long, long Sundays that I spent alone with my mother in the old cabin are indelibly stamped on my memory. Sometimes I thought I should die with loneliness. At such times my mother would try to comfort me with stories, or with letters from her invalid mother across the sea; and then we both would cry. Once when I refused to be comforted, and bitterly complained because my father left us alone, my mother explained to me in a simple, awe-inspiring manner the tragedy of the World's sin and sorrow together with the suffering love of God. How my father was going forth in God's compelling love to help Him save His children from the im-

pending doom of sin, she pictured so vividly that I felt glad to live and suffer in such a cause. This was, probably, the most effective sermon to which I ever listened. And then my mother gathered me into her arms and made me conscious of the greatest thing in the world; a love that is infinitely deeper than words; something so like God that we need look no farther for a fitting symbol of Him.

As a child I was very susceptible to fear. I remember one bitter cold night when the winds howled and the thieves prowled. Every nerve in me ached with fear. That night my mother kneeling by her bed, with her little children at her side, prayed in a low tremulous voice, and with a sweet English accent, until God seemed nearer than the raging winds, and more powerful than the evil forces that were abroad to do us harm. How happy I was the next morning to find that the wind had subsided, and that the horses were not stolen, and that no evil had befallen us! When a little child, religion was as real to me as my parents, or the atmosphere I breathed, or the food I ate.

I am not certain of ever having been in a church until I was almost grown. But when I was probably five years old, I accompanied my mother to a revival meeting in an old schoolhouse. This schoolhouse, even to the lathing, was made of black walnut that was sawed at a local mill. Which of the many denominations was conducting the services I do not know. But one night there were probably ten people kneeling at what they called the "mourner's bench." During the evening such a psychic

wave passed over those at the altar that the packed congregation, to see what was happening, rose as one person. At this point, my mother lifted me onto the desk before her which afforded me a plain view of all those who were kneeling at the front. A young woman with head thrown back and hair disheveled, was wringing her hands and crying in piercing tones, " O God, save my poor soul from hell!" Just beyond, a man lay in a trance. And then another woman, with perfectly rapturous face, throwing her head back, clapped her hands and shouted " glory." Other seekers were groaning and pleading with tremulous voices. The Christians who were assisting the seekers alternated their groanings of intercession with " amens " and shouts of praise. As it appeared to me the realms of the blessed and the realms of the damned were mingling their voices in that tumultuous scene. Heaven and hell seemed veritable realities before my eyes, and the picture was burned into my soul.

The religion of my parents was simple, loving, and thoroughly ethical. These meetings were not criticized by them except that my father sometimes remarked at home that he liked the quiet meetings best.

Much of the time there were no meetings in the community. Yet betimes services were conducted by all kinds of ministers, " descript and non-descript." It was not uncommon to hear these ministers say that no one ever got to heaven except by way of the " mourner's bench." One minister remarked that there was not a converted person in the Presbyterian Church except a

few individuals who were converted outside at such meetings as he was conducting. Never having seen any of them, I took his word for it that the Presbyterians were an ungodly set.

Altogether it became a fixed thought in my mind that I should need to get "old people's religion" or be lost. Indeed, that belief was very common throughout America when I was a child. Even the Presbyterians believed it, though they kept their mourner's bench out of sight. Accordingly, when I was fifteen years old, and getting to be a big boy, the crisis came; because temptations were coming in thick and fast. Going to a revival one night in the schoolhouse and finding the seats all full, I took a board from under the stove and placed it on the coal pail for a seat. As I sat there the thought came to me, "When are you going to get religion?" This was followed by another, "Wouldn't it be strange if I went to the mourner's bench to-night?" "Not for five years yet," my heart quickly responded. "Not until I am twenty years old." Being a bashful boy I felt terrified at the mere thought of taking such a step before that crowd of "rowdies" who were openly scoffing. "But," my mind said, "if you make a start in five years it will again be now." It seemed plain to me that one "now" would be about as embarrassing as another. "Wouldn't it be strange if I just went forward to-night without any regard to my feelings?" was a question that kept asserting itself. My mind swayed and tipped first one way and then the other until finally it literally fell on the side of

a decision. "It is to-night." To me this seemed deeper than any other decision I had ever made,— than which no firmer decision could be made. Being thoroughly aware of its ethical significance, my heart involuntarily said, "You see, O God, what I have done." Not to have regarded myself a bound person from that time forth would have meant the perjuring of my deepest soul. It was an awe-inspiring decision at a time when God was to get either a great deal more or a great deal less of my life as the days went by. It would have been an irreparable loss to me if this great decision had not been made at that time. Even now, I thank God with a growing gratitude for helping me to make that decision. So far, the experience was perfectly normal for a Christian boy in the adolescent period,— though at that time I had never known a Christian boy. This experience of an unconditional surrender to the will of God should have brought me peace and strength; but it did not, because I utterly discredited my previous religious life as being no more than moral development. Real religion, in my thinking, would not begin until I had experienced the miracle of regeneration at the "mourner's bench."

The die had been cast. And now the great miracle must be achieved! So I went forward. The knowledge that I was observed by mocking eyes hurt like the thongs of a whip on a bare back. For a few moments I could think of nothing else. Then I tried to feel sorry for my sins; and not succeeding in that, I tried to feel sorry because I was not sorry. Those kneeling with me

asked whether I believed in God. No one could have believed it more fully than I did. Then they asked me if I believed that He sent His Son into the world to save sinners. This I believed without question. Did I believe that He came to save me, and that He wanted to save me now? This, too, I believed. "Do you feel that He saves you now?" I did not know. "Well," they said, "you will know when He saves you,— so you must make no mistake there." And thus we went the rounds, over and over again. While I believed everything, yet I did not experience the miracle. Things seemed to grow worse and more confused as time went by. As they pleaded, first with God to save me, and then with me to surrender all to God and believe, I became utterly bewildered and hardened. There seemed to be no reality in anything. The groans and sighs, the pressure of the hand, the pats on the back, the rhythmic music, the loud and fervent prayers, became a meaningless jargon. I was heartily glad when the hour was over so that I could be alone. Once being alone, I did pray earnestly and continuously for God to save me, and felt a great depression of spirits without further results. The next night I repeated the experience of the previous evening with like sad consequences. The next day I was greatly depressed, but made up my mind that I would get religion or break a blood vessel in the attempt;— and I nearly broke the blood vessel. In the afternoon while carrying a heavy load of corn on my back, I stumbled over something which caused me to say "Oh!"

and as I added the word God, it sounded like profanity. But it was not, for prayer had become automatic. This incident caused me to smile,— the first time, I believe, in two days. As I continued to pray without ceasing, there came to me after awhile a little suggestion of gladness which caused me to exclaim, "Oh, I believe I am getting religion!" Though the burden seemed to be lifting, yet it was some minutes before another feeling of gladness came. During the supper hour it seemed almost certain that I was getting religion. Nothing, however, was said about it as I wanted to be perfectly sure.

After supper I started for the schoolhouse across the dark fields. During that journey of over a mile, the psychic lights came on making all things beautiful. At the same time I was made inexpressibly glad. The great change appeared to be in the universe rather than in myself. I laughed and cried for joy. Recalling the Psalm, "For . . . by my God have I leaped over a wall," that, I thought, would be an easy thing to do if a wall were there. What with laughing, making speeches, and thanking God, I soon completed the journey.

As the schoolhouse was seated to face the door, on arriving late, I confronted the whole congregation. This arrangement of seats made it unnecessary for the people to turn and strain their necks to see each one who entered.

In pioneer days it was customary to take a candle with you to church. On arriving at the schoolhouse you would take your penknife, push the small blade through

the candle, stick the protruding blade into the window sash, and there you were, as nice as could be. Or else you would stand the candle on the desk in some melted tallow.

Though the schoolhouse was but dimly lighted, and the people whom I faced that night were an ordinary crowd, yet in my psychic state I saw the people as angel figures under limelight. And as the only vacant seats were in the "Amen corner," I sat facing the congregation during the entire service. The sermon was wonderful to me beyond words to express; and yet I seemed able to understand it and to see all around it.

After the sermon an invitation was given to "mourners." As none went forward, the minister then came to me to inquire of my condition. When with great joy I told him that I was converted, I was asked to relate my experience. This unexpected request shattered my beautiful world as completely as a hammer stroke would have shattered a piece of crystal. Such a stage fright seized me that I could neither move nor speak before they were compelled to go on with the service. This embarrassing experience sent me from the highest state of bliss to the deepest state of gloom. Peter's denial seemed trivial in comparison with mine; he had denied the Lord under trying circumstances, but I had denied Him while sitting in glory.

A little later, when the minister rose and stated that they would "open the doors of the Church" for any who desired to join, there ensued a terrible struggle

within me. During the few minutes of exhortation that followed I seriously questioned my heart. I knew that candidates were expected to answer the question, "Have you found God in the pardon of your sins, and do you now have peace with God?" But being in a state of torment, how could I claim peace with God? Though my conversion still seemed like a miracle, yet never before had I been in such a humiliated or distressed state of mind. Before ever I tried to "get religion," I had plighted my soul and honor that I would follow God from that time forward. Even now I knew that I should follow Him, but how could I say that I had peace with God when my burden remained in spite of my earnest prayer to be forgiven? Had I in that act of denial become a "backslider," and was it necessary for me to be converted again? As a large percentage of the Christians present had been converted two or more times to my knowledge, a second conversion was not strange to me. Never doubting that I had been converted, and knowing why I was in despair, and believing that my suffering was wholly deserved, I dismissed the thought of a second conversion. "How can a person know beforehand," I reasoned, "that he will feel at peace with God at the moment the question is asked?" By "now" do they not mean something more general; to-night, for example? Deciding that there must be some latitude to the word "now" and that God would understand my honesty of purpose, I went forward and united with the Church. As I look back upon it, it still seems a most wise decision.

Though fully expecting to be happy again after joining the Church, yet my misery only increased. *This was inevitable.* I had identified religion with an *abnormal psychic state.* And such a state would not return without another terrific effort.

The next night, with an embarrassment that caused my cheeks to burn like fire, I rose before the scoffers and told them that God had converted me. Again I expected to feel happy. But, naturally, my sorrow only deepened as the abnormal state did not return. For the next two weeks I tried with all my original earnestness to get back my happiness; but without success. One day while in a valley far from any human being, where the woods covered the hill before me, I was looking up into the sky and still pleading with God to restore my happy state of mind. Then the thought occurred to me, "Where is God?" At that time I was so ignorant of the universe that I thought the earth had a ceiling, and that the ceiling of the earth was the floor of heaven. It seemed to be about three rifle shots away. I thought that if one could get through the ceiling of the earth he would be in heaven, and there would be God. As I stood there gazing into the sky my mind said, "Why does God not show Himself?" That He could part the clouds and show His face seemed the most natural and reasonable thing in the world. Why, then, did He not do so? Since He neither blesses me in answer to my prayers, nor shows Himself, possibly He does not exist. My wonderful experience

may have been nothing but a highly wrought state of feelings.

I then recalled that ministers based their belief in the existence of God on certain arguments. But suddenly this seemed the strangest procedure imaginable. Why had God left us to argue and reason about His existence? Should He not settle so great a question beyond all argument? How strange it would be if my earthly father should stay away from us until we did not know whether he was dead or alive! We had the satisfaction of loving and obeying our father without ever a chance to doubt his existence. If our Heavenly Father would make me equally certain of His existence I should follow Him through flood and fire. "Then why does God not show Himself?" "Isn't it strange that He has hidden forever and forever!"

Here I remembered the Scripture which says, "No man can see God and live." But my heart quickly responded, "It is one thing to come near enough to kill us, and quite another to come near enough to convince us. Oh, isn't it strange that He hides forever?"

Then I thought of Jesus. But my heart replied, "Maybe Jesus was mistaken." If He had a rapturous feeling like mine, and was able to sustain it, He would continue to believe in God even if He did not exist. Nothing short of God's personal appearance, it seemed to me, could settle the question. "Then why does God not show Himself? There is no sense in hiding; and if no

sense in it, then it is wrong; and if wrong, then there is no God. Because God, if He exists, must be good and sensible."

Therefore, when my reasoning led me to say, "There *can't* be a God," I found that unbelief had entered the marrow of my being. I felt that God could not possibly do such a foolish and wicked thing as to hide from His children.

Having reached this conclusion, I felt alarmed at my wicked thoughts. They were not, however, to be driven away. From that day forward the sky became more gray, and cold, and Godless. An awful crisis had come into my life. It seemed an irreparable loss if there were no God. My life, also, would go out in eternal night. If there was a God, and I gave up faith, then I should go to an endless hell of inexpressible torment. There was no comfort in either alternative. The problem was no longer the problem of the Church; it was my personal problem. And the battle had to be fought to a decisive issue. Being impaled on the two horns of the dilemma, I found it increasingly difficult to reproduce the exalted state of feeling on which I still relied for assurance.

Never having met a college graduate, of course I had not heard one preach. It was in the college chapel, four years later, that I first listened to a sermon by a college man. My impression was that he made neither noise nor light. That he made but little noise I knew. But I am now willing to admit that he may have shed more light than I saw. Preaching often fails to make any connec-

tion with the fundamental ideas and difficulties of doubting minds.

In my new state of doubt, the first impulse was to confide in my father and Christian friends. But then I realized that I knew all the stock phrases, and that none of them met my case. If confronted with the old phrases would I not argue, and might I not confirm myself in a possible error? Was it not safer to fight it out with God, if He existed, than to argue with those who could not feel what I had felt? The insistence of these questions caused me to keep my secret wholly to myself, and to go on with the struggle. Twenty-two years later during the last visit with my father, as we rode together over the hills, I told him this story. With a look of tenderness I shall never forget, he replied, "I believe the story because you tell me, but I am glad you did not tell me at the time. I could not have helped you." Said he, "I do not recall ever in my life doubting the inspiration of the Scriptures, or the existence of God. I have often doubted my worthiness and acceptance, but nothing more." Still believing that I did the wise thing under the circumstances, I was glad to have his approval. If an honest doubter asks for bread, he is not infrequently given a stone by well-meaning Christians,— and neither can understand the other.

As this is a *case study,* it should be said that my first mistake was in *discrediting* my early religious experience. My second mistake was in identifying religion with an *extreme psychic state.* And when my psychic state failed

me, then my *utterly false images* of God and the universe completed the destruction of my faith. If I could have reproduced the psychic state readily, my false images of God and the universe would not have troubled me for many years.

The ministers who created these false impressions in my mind were not deserving of censure, because they did not understand the forces with which they were dealing — and the community was in great need of something. Even for me, it was best that I did what we thought was right regardless of what followed.

Having entered upon the vigorous adolescent period, I greatly needed to take my stand as an adult Christian. I needed to realize such a new influence as a thorough commitment of myself would bring. This, however, no one in the community understood.

We now know that one may be genuinely converted and hypnotized at the same time. That is, he may enter God's service with the noblest spirit of loyalty, and at the same time submit himself to a process that will induce the hypnotic state. Likewise, it is possible for one to be hypnotized under religious influences without being converted. This is the case with those who wish religion only if it will give them more pleasure than their sins. Though they may not deeply analyze it, yet their conversion is an experiment to see which they like the better; and when their hypnotic happiness leaves them, they return to their greater pleasure in sin. Or, when the idea and method are rational, one may be converted

without being hypnotized. In this case a complete dedication of self to the will of God is trusted to bring its own rich reward in noble enthusiasm and fine appreciation.

Since I had always been a Christian, it was not conversion that I needed, but a deeper commitment of myself to the will and work of God. And as I have already explained, this I did before trying to "get religion." The moral will is the spiritual spine. If it stands erect in its duties toward God and men, the whole spiritual life will come into normal feeling and action. My unconditional submission to the will of God was normal, beautiful, and necessary. But the experience which came two days later should be characterized as *a super-normal psychic state, self-induced.* While the psychic state lasted my true religious feelings coöperated vigorously; but when it subsided, as it was bound to do, my true religious emotions likewise disappeared. For years, all references to spirituality were understood by me to mean an exciting, nervous thrill; such a thrill as I had once felt. This led me to study the feelings, a few years later, to see if I could determine their value. I found that I was able to hypnotize a man so that he thought he saw God; and then I could cause him to fall down in adoration before his imaginary deity. Or, by taking ether, I could reproduce the glory world of my own so-called conversion. Feelings alone are not to be trusted, for the objects which they often create do not exist. On the other hand, real objects, valid and knowable, produce appropriate feelings

when we are rightly related to them. Never have I been in such a state of pain or dejection but that I knew that I loved my children if my attention was called to it. I still demand, therefore, an objective, knowable God before I can love Him.

While greatly deploring such religious exercises as are calculated to produce extreme psychic states, yet I bring an indictment against the average Church of this generation because its religious feelings are sub-normal. The latter condition is probably as dangerous as the former. Even our physical temperature must be allowed to run neither too high nor too low. If in everything but religion we feel warmth and enthusiasm, we reveal a deplorable religious condition. For if one intelligently and fully commits himself to the will and service of God, appropriate feelings will come to him as surely as color comes to ripening fruit.

When prayer availed me nothing in bringing back the spirit of God — as I conceived of it — I first questioned my own heart. And when it no longer condemned me, I then questioned God. As I understood it, to produce a rapturous feeling was God's part. My part was to believe and obey. If only the hand of faith could succeed in laying hold of God the spiritual current would come on with a thrill. A great deal of this sensational religion still exists. It is to be found in all our great cities as well as in rural communities.

Let two errors like false experiences and false images of God unite and they will bring forth a whole brood

of errors. So far as I am able to analyze, I always had a perfect sense of God's character. If He existed at all, He was infinitely great and wise and good. But these characteristics simply meant the *quality* of God and not God Himself. *Character without being was like a smile without a face.* It was this God behind the character that I utterly misapprehended. My *false picture* of God's being, of the universe, and the relation between the two was the cause of my religious vexation. If we add to these the fickleness of a sensational experience — labeled, true spiritual religion — we may begin to understand my religious undoing.

I dare say that the subject of extreme religious experience will not trouble many of my readers, but half the population is vexed by false images of God and the universe. These false images are so prevalent that one trembles for the future of religion in a scientific age. As to certain aspects of God's existence, the confusion is becoming greater every day,— and there are good reasons for it. Since the masses are coming to have a fairly accurate conception of the main outlines of the universe, their false images of God's being are faring badly in this new world. Many are casting out their unsatisfactory image of God without anything to take its place. Some claim that we are much better off to think of God's character without trying to form any conception of His being. Generally, however, when His image goes God goes with it. Those who have been steeped in religion from their youth, may continue to worship God after He

has almost disappeared; but succeeding generations will have little interest in such an evasive God. They will wish to know that God *is* before they attribute character to Him.

The various psychic cults are trying to find a more satisfying idea of God; but they are simply making a bad matter worse. Over against this, however, is the popular phrase of the day, "No one can possibly conceive of what God is like! So do not advertise your ignorance by trying." This, probably, is the saddest of all.

The religious dynamo is in the heart, or moral feelings, while the circuit is in the head, or formal ideas. If the circuit is broken the light goes out. As long as one's ideas are not discredited by himself, he may get some light with a very poor circuit. But once let him thoroughly discredit his own mental images, and the light will cease to shine.

The dynamo may be run long after the circuit is broken, and the light has gone out. I ran mine for many years. The minister's wife previously referred to was doing the same thing. Many students reported to Professor Leuba that they continued to pray, through habit or sentiment, but that God had so faded from their minds that prayer no longer meant anything to them. Many learned scientists revealed the "broken circuit" of their thoughts by giving their crude conceptions or no conceptions of God. These men have long since ceased to run their religious dynamo.

If the lights refuse to come on, after a while one grows

tired of stoking the furnace merely to keep the dynamo running. Therefore, in the succeeding chapters my aim will be to show how I mended my circuit.

After continuing my fruitless struggle for two years I became desperate. For one thing, I had no religious young people with whom to associate. When not alone, I worked with vile men who never allowed much time to elapse without indulging in obscene conversation. Living in a community where we had never seen a railroad, or a piano, or an organ, I found little to entertain or comfort me. And my religion added greatly to my burden. There was just work and privations and fruitless prayers. So it is not strange that at the end of two years I wished that I might die. This feeling came to me with such force one day, when I was working in a distant, lonely place, that I gave audible expression to the wish. Not that I wanted to die on that particular day! I have never seen the time when I wanted to die to-day. But hoping that I might die in ten years, I resolved anew that I would just stiffen my neck, and grit my teeth, and pray on until the end came — which I hoped would not be too distant. During these two years I was very faithful to every known Christian duty. Once I even tried to pray in prayer meeting, but broke down with fright in the middle of the first sentence. I regularly bore testimony, however, to my determination to go forward in the Christian life.

Soon after the time of my deep depression it was announced that a series of revival meetings was to be held

in the community. An uneducated old minister, rather feeble in body, was to conduct the meetings. As there were but few Christians to help him, it looked like a great undertaking. This question rose in my mind, "Would it be wrong for me to take an active part in persuading others to become Christians while I myself am in doubt of God's existence?" I had not then heard of people doing Church work to gain social standing. And if I had, it could not have been a motive because socially I already belonged to the "four hundred." Some men were reported to have joined the Church to beat a neighbor in a horse trade or an ox trade — and this I knew to be very wicked. But as I had neither horses nor oxen to trade there were but two motives that compelled me to go forward. The first motive was the hope that in this way I might find God. The second was that I might help someone else to be religious,— since other people appeared to have more faith. I decided that the proposed course was justifiable because if God did not exist it could make but little difference, and if He did it was very important that people should be brought to Him. Consequently, I selected a young man of my own age. He was on his way to the schoolhouse with a band of hilarious young people when I called him aside. We were very late in reaching the services because out in the dark I labored long and hard with my friend and used every art of persuasion that I could command before I brought him to a decision. Finally, however, he promised to go to the "mourner's bench" if I would go with him. Then

we entered the schoolhouse, and each one kept his promise. My friend became so desperately wrought up at the altar that his parents, who were not Christians, did not know what to do with him when the services were over. They therefore asked me to take him home with me for the night. My friend continued to weep all the way home, and frequently requested that we stop to pray. That journey of a mile and a quarter across the fields I shall never forget. But before we went to sleep, suddenly clasping my hand, he exclaimed, "Oh, I am converted." Knowing how he felt I was very glad for him, but at the same time my heart cried within me, "I do wonder if there is anything in it! It is wonderful to him now, I know, but how will he feel to-morrow, or next week, or in six months?"

However, I next persuaded his parents to go forward, and the minister asked me to pray for them at the altar — which I did. They, too, were converted, but no blessing came to me. During the two weeks, I led eleven people to the altar, and was asked by the minister each night to offer prayer for the seekers.

On the last night of the series, near the close, the minister said:

"Now there is a little business to be attended to, and will Brother Richard Swain please withdraw from the room?" I was so surprised and excited that I arose and went out into a temperature below zero without either overcoat or hat. Leaving the reader to judge of my ethics and manners, I will confess that I put my ear up

to the wall and listened with all my might. The minister said:

"Some of us have been considering the matter, and we are convinced that Brother Richard Swain has a decided call to the ministry. We want you, therefore, if you think it is wise, to recommend him to the conference for license to preach."

This was such a shock to me that a little cry went up from my heart,—"And I don't even know that there is a God!"

As there was no dissenting vote the minister said, "You may now call him in." If only my coat and hat had been with me I should not have been present when the door opened. However, with the temperature below zero, and neither overcoat nor hat, even a young candidate for the ministry could not refuse to enter. But it would have been more to his comfort if the congregation had not been seated to face the door.

Through this vote of the Church I was compelled to grapple with a new question of ethics. Would it be right for me under the circumstances to appear for examination? I had not asked for license to preach. The matter had been thrust upon me without my knowledge and consent. How could I know but this was the road over which I was being led to the light? Besides, eleven people had responded to my appeal. Would I care to be a minister? It seemed to me that there was nothing in the world I should so much like to be as a minister if only I could know there was a God. This feeling de-

cided me to accept the invitation and appear for examination.

While my education had not gone beyond that of the common country schools, and while I was but seventeen years of age, yet the average minister of the community had even less education. Not until three years after I was licensed to preach did I learn that there was such an institution in the world as a Theological Seminary. However, in those pioneer days all the ministers, missionaries, Irish pack-peddlers, and horse thieves who passed through put up at my father's house for the night without ever being charged a cent. They more than paid their way, though, I can assure you, by having to talk religion and theology until midnight with my father who was a born theologian. Though my father was not an educated man, yet he had picked up an immense amount of knowledge along certain lines, and always enjoyed a friendly debate more than a good dinner. At such times, from early childhood, I had been allowed to sit in the chimney corner and listen until the last word was said. It was my motion-picture show. And no child ever had more pleasure than came to me when I saw that my father had "wound up" his man in the argument. Then, with the greatest cordiality, my father would show the guest to bed. As there was but one great room, and beds none too many, I usually slept with the guest. And according to the guest's report in the morning, I had given him the completest kicking he ever had in his life.

With such training, and in such a community, it is not

strange that my biblical and doctrinal examination was pronounced entirely satisfactory. After I had gone to school for ten years it, probably, would not have been so satisfactory. Indeed, I was strongly advised not to go to college, as it was likely to rob me of my spirituality; and besides, many souls would be lost while I was getting an education.

Though I continued for a time on the farm or in the coal mines, yet I was told to go out and preach somewhere on Sundays. Accordingly, I would ride ten or twenty miles on Sunday to preach in different schoolhouses. Putting the rein over the horn of the saddle, I would plead before the cold gray sky for an unknown God to renew my happy feelings as a token of His existence. But no happiness, or assurance, came to me. When the time came to preach, I felt the importance of not throwing our lives away in sinful living, and so was able to give them some very earnest advice. Then on the return trip I would continue to pray to an unsympathetic sky. Nothing, however, ever came of it except a deeper depression of spirits. Though the dynamo was running at a terrific rate, yet the circuit of my thoughts was broken beyond my ability to repair. So I decided to go to college at any sacrifice.

Boarding a train for the first time, I went two hundred miles for my preparatory course in connection with the college where I expected to graduate. But no religious experience came to me until the middle of my sophomore year. Then while studying Mark Hopkins'

little book, "The Law of Love, and Love as a Law," I got a new insight into the human soul. I could see that if one would bring all his powers into harmony, and then relate them to the beautiful enfolding universe, all things must work together for his good,— if by his good one meant the perfect unfolding of his life. Instantly there came a great joy in living. It took shape in the thought, "All things work together for good to them that love God." I felt that no proposition in geometry was more capable of proof. A life with its powers united in the will of God must unfold to match the harmony without, even as the rose unfolds to the light and warmth of the sun. Besides, I now had entertainment and beautiful friends. Almost any good thing seemed possible. "This," I said, "must be what intelligent people mean by Christian experience." The only remaining question was the old one, "Is there a God?" Is God "The Allness of things about us?" This, however, seemed too pantheistic. And the personal God still evaded me. So I decided that the question of God was too much for me, and that I would just wait until I should meet the "wise men" who knew. In the meantime I would *assume* that there was a God; for the college president believed that there was, and prayed to Him every day at chapel.

As the happy unfolding of my life continued I tried to commit all to God whose will, if He existed, I very well knew. At any rate there was something in the universe that matched my need. I would just call it God until I met the "wise men" in further courses of study

which by this time I had fully resolved upon. So the last two and a half years of my college course were very beautiful; they constantly increased my joy in living. No small part of this better experience was due to the influence of the Christian gentleman and fascinating preacher who became our new college pastor.

Here it becomes necessary to relate something more delicate than anything that has gone before. While I was in college my younger and only brother passed through a great moral crisis. As I dearly loved him he was much in my mind. During my senior year I dreamed night after night that he was killed. In these dreams I was always with my two older sisters hunting our brother in the woods. Feeling certain that we should find him dead, we usually came upon him by an old log cabin where he lay dead and mangled. I have no theories about the dreams, but the impression made upon my mind was so deep that when I went home, after graduating from college, I felt that I must do something to help him. Accordingly it was planned that I should spend three or four days with him in the harvest field where he was running a heading machine. There I hoped we should have a pleasant time, and find an opportunity to shed some light on the deeper meanings of life. Then some evening we would have a quiet little talk when I might persuade him to be a Christian. As I was going a long distance to a theological school, and did not expect to see him again for three years, I hoped to accomplish my purpose during the week at my disposal.

For two and a half days we worked together with many pleasant little chats. It then being Saturday noon, my father wanted me to drive fourteen miles with him and preach for him the next day. I could return Monday and be with my brother one or two days before the long journey. But Saturday afternoon a great storm arose, and at midnight my host awakened me saying, "Your brother is killed by lightning."

Though we started home immediately, the mud was so deep and sticky that it required till daylight to make the journey. There had been a cloudburst, and such an electric storm as is seldom seen. From midnight till dawn we dragged through the mud under an indescribable electrical display. Forked lightning splitting the sky in every direction made the whole heavens lurid with light, while the low thunder like distant artillery scarcely ceased to roll. No pen can describe that journey. Nature seemed omnipotent and awe-inspiring. At first my heart was dazed and dumb. Then it cried, "Why did God kill my brother at this little nick of time when I was hoping to bring him to Christ? Was there ever anything like this? Why *did* He take him?"

Then while I was fixedly watching the omnipotent display before me my mind asked:

"Did God kill him or did the great and terrible machine, called the world, kill him? What is the world, and what is God? When does God act, and when does the universe act? Would they not be squarely in each other's way much of the time? The world I know, and its ac-

tivities I behold, but where is God? Does He have an abode, or is He a sort of spiritual ether that pervades the universe?" And my heart responded, "Oh, you have never yet settled the question of whether there is a God!" So once more God faded into a dream, or a guess, while the elements continued to display their terrifying power.

At daylight I stood with a broken heart beside my dead brother, believing either that there was no God, or else that my brother had gone to endless torment. A few moments later I saw my father kneel by his side, and heard him say, "Oh, my son, my son, would to God I had died for thee!"

In a short time we were invited to breakfast, and my father being unable to speak motioned to me to say grace. However I managed I do not know, but out of a choking throat I said grace to as empty and Godless a world as any human being ever faced.

Two weeks after my brother's death I entered the theological seminary. The deep, vast, and unshakable verities from which I could not escape were sorrow and love. All else was chaos. As a hungry man seeks for food, so I sought for light. Much of the theology in the books which I read irritated me so that I could scarcely eat my food at mealtimes. Yet it was important that I should learn the history of human thought. All of my professors I truly loved and respected, but the attitude of theological schools more than thirty years ago was not wholly suited to the needs of one on the border of a "new world-awakening" whose faith had suffered so

much and so long. The theological world was not quite ready to give the help that it now gives to many suffering minds.

During my first year in the seminary I frequently dreamed of seeing my brother in torment. Sometimes I would wake trembling, and even when I could throw off the thought and go to sleep, I was liable to repeat the dream in some new form.

Once when I was walking with one of the professors, as true a Christian man as ever I knew, I told him of the circumstances of my brother's death. He asked me if my parents were Christians. I told him that they were very good Christians. Then he counseled me not to go off into any heresies, but to feel comforted concerning my brother; for "The promises were to the parents and to their children unto the third and fourth generation."

While I listened to this in silence, yet the following thoughts went through my mind:

"Then God would save my brother who had not improved his privileges, while He would consign to endless torment our poor play-fellows who were not blessed with the good influence of Christian parents."

My mind instinctively felt what I had discretion not to say: "I should despise a God who had no more ethical sense than that. God should be harder on my brother than on them."

Much of my philosophy and theology was worked out during my seminary course; but there were gaps that I could not fill. So I next went to Yale to study philoso-

phy. In postgraduate work, through the guidance of professors, I expected to find the " wise men " for whom I had waited so long. However, these " wise men " are not readily understood in a few weeks. They have a poor faculty for making connection with all the ideas that still linger in the mind of callow youth. At any rate it soon dawned upon me that there was no such God as I was looking for or else these men were unable to give Him to me. When this conviction came to me I went out from a recitation one night into the dark and once more fought the old battle. Standing on the New Haven Green and looking up into the pelting sleet I said:

" Now I have met the ' wise men,' and still I do not know whether there is an inspired Bible, or a heaven, or a God." But I exclaimed, " O God, if you are, and if I should ever meet you anywhere in eternity, I would run to you as a little child runs to a father. I would tell you how weak and sinful and ignorant I am, and I know you would love me." That night on the old Green, while in the dark and pelted with sleet, I went out onto the last crag where any human soul can go, and cried into the infinite depths, " O God, if you are there, some day I shall know you and love you." In that act I passed beyond all men and all institutions, and took my stand with the final reality, whatever it might be, and at least I was free and not afraid. Though thoroughly agnostic still, yet I could quietly work and wait.

Returning to my studies and resolving to appropriate whatever I could understand, I was surprised to find how

much of the teaching ministered to my needs. Before long I came to see that God did not have a central nucleus, or ghost form in heaven; neither did He resemble a refined substance like ether. Spirit was something quite different from what I had supposed. My mind was hitting the trail. Then I understood that God had not revealed Himself to the world according to my demand, because no such God existed in heaven or earth. So one day in class I asked a professor, who is now dead, if he thought we should see God in heaven as we see men and trees here. At the same time I assured him that I did not. His answer was, "I think your position would be a very dangerous doctrine to teach." But my own conviction was that it was becoming a very dangerous doctrine not to teach. Time has proved that I was right. Millions of people are suffering to-day from false images of God or from no image of God. Not long ago when I related this class incident to a Yale man, he remarked, "Well, Professor —— made great growth before he died."

My categorical answers to the four questions at the head of this chapter are: When we have rational ideas of God and the universe we shall see that He is leaving nothing undone to reveal Himself. To an enlightened understanding it does not seem possible that God could reveal Himself so that no one could doubt His existence. Though the existence of God is a question of doubt and discussion with many, yet we may achieve deep and satisfying assurance if we go about it in the right way. I

think it would be morally wrong for God to leave His children in doubt of His existence if He were able to reveal Himself.

This chapter is largely excavation. We have dug the hole deep so that we may commence in the next chapter to lay the foundation on solid bottom. And this was necessary if our proposed structure is to stand.

Allow me this closing word. When I began to get on my religious feet at Yale, I unexpectedly received a call to a college pastorate. And though the usual number of sceptics were found among the students, yet in many respects they were the most savable men in college. Usually, if you could hit the keys of their souls they would ring back and ring true.

CHAPTER II

HOW SCIENCE SAVES RELIGION, OR MODERN KNOWLEDGE AND RELIGION

What is God?
Who is God?
Where is God?
What does God *do?*
If the ancients made their gods, how do we know that we are not making our God?
May we not be communing with a mere idea?

MODERN KNOWLEDGE AND RELIGION

Christian character, the Christian college, and Christian civilization have been very important factors in the discovery and development of modern learning.

Expecting to derive much benefit from the sciences, Christian people with fine enthusiasm strove to promote them. Nevertheless, there came a time when the allied sciences threatened to turn upon and destroy the religion that had so carefully nurtured them. When the scientific imagery of the Bible began to clash with the clearly ascertained facts of science, many people concluded that science and religion were contradictory; however, the crude conceptions of the material universe found in the Bible are no integral part of religion.

That religion may discard its wornout clothes for new and better ones has not been an easy lesson for believers, or unbelievers, to learn. Thinking that religion must stand or fall with the scientific accuracy of the Bible, some drew back from modern science preferring religion; others clung to the new learning forsaking religion. For a time, therefore, it was inevitable that religion and her foster daughter, modern science, should not be on the best of terms; because the daughter could not approve of the mother's dress, and the mother thought the daughter utterly lacking in becoming reverence. However, with their great need of each other, let us believe that they are now settling down to a lasting friendship of mutual helpfulness.

Unfortunately, the opinion is gaining considerable credence that modern Christians are believing less and less, and that finally they will cease to believe in religion altogether.

But this is the very opposite of the truth, for they are still believing the old religion, though in a vastly bigger and better way. For, at the present time, where its help is welcome, modern learning is rendering a beautiful service to Christian faith. And this is the grateful testimony of thousands of intelligent, consecrated people. No well-informed person, however, would deny that science has injured, and will increasingly weaken, the faith of those who do not know how to make a religious use of modern learning.

While religion and science have distinctive fields to

cultivate, yet neither may disregard the claims of the other with impunity. Nevertheless, we do rejoice to see science tearing down the "old cabin" of an unscientific world in which the Church has lived too long. But when it proposes to shut God out of the *new mansion* of a scientific universe, those who know and love Him will seriously object,— especially since the new knowledge makes God better understood, and more needed than ever.

It is likewise pleasant to see religion standing for spiritual verities and duties, but when it demands that the Christian shall live in a world that is crude and half false, the modern man resents it. He simply cannot do it. Yet, to-day and always, religion should be a simple story that anyone may understand; but it should not be clothed in such crude and antiquated forms as to antagonize the man of modern knowledge.

During these introductory statements, we may as well admit that the average scientist appears to have as poor a knowledge of religion as the average Christian has of science. Too often he is still resisting religious conceptions that all intelligent Christians have long since outgrown, or else he is adopting philosophical theories that are only half thought through. This is amazingly true of some men who are superb in their own chosen lines of research. No one is hit by this statement unless he is standing in the line of the shot. Whether or not the reader is hit, I beg of him to keep friendly with me until he has heard my simple story of God in His world.

Could we but free the religion of Jesus from the crude

psychology and the antiquated science of other days, and see it at home in the fairer world of to-day, it would shine with new luster; and at the same time give a rich, new meaning to the world itself,— such as it can never have apart from religion. Science, and not religion, was responsible for crude science.— Religion will be responsible if it retains a science that has become antiquated.

Taking our stand then in the midst of modern knowledge, I shall endeavor to *picture* religion both at home and happy in the new world. I shall not have much to say directly about scientific subjects, but shall constantly try to keep in mind the man with modern information. The nearer I can make this book resemble a primer, the better satisfied I shall be. If one could so write that the learned would approve, and the ignorant understand, his joy should be full. To give a simple *description* of God in His world congenial to the scholar, while comprehensible and acceptable to common busy people, would be the highest possible service one could wish to render. In these days there is great need of a clear presentation of God; a presentation that is free from the entanglements of technical learning, and at the same time consonant with the known facts of life. Practical men would like to see "the mended circuit of our religious thoughts," since their circuits, in many cases at least, seem broken beyond repair. They are asking for a simple and satisfying gospel that is cognizant of the facts and forces among which they live and toil. We shall begin, therefore, at the very beginning.

1. What is God?

The discussion which immediately follows does not concern itself with why we believe in God, but aims to give a definite idea of how we conceive of Him. For those who have a natural sense of God, or a religious nature, a satisfying conception of Him will be ample for their spiritual needs. And, furthermore, those who doubt God's existence need first of all a definite idea of what we mean by the term Deity.

It is a pleasure, therefore, to answer in the words of Jesus, "God is a spirit."

This might very well be regarded as a final answer but for the fact that spirit means all sorts of things to different minds. When I once asked a company of intelligent people if I were a spirit, they promptly answered "no," but supposed I should be when I died. They seemed to think of spirit as a ghost, as something that might appear or disappear through locked doors. The same idea apparently obtained universally in times past, and that doubtless accounts for the fact that the Greek word, meaning spirit, was translated "Ghost" in the Scriptures and Apostles' Creed. But the idea of a *visible* spirit should perish. Spirits are neither evil ghosts nor Holy Ghosts. Even if there were a ghost, that which appeared could be no more than the instrument of the spirit, and not the spirit itself. However refined and ghostly the form, the spirit would remain as invisible as when it had a gross human body.

As further evidence of confusion on this subject, a young man from one of our good colleges seeking membership in my Church, informed me that he had peculiar views. Spirit, whether applied to God or man, had no meaning for him. He wanted to join the Church because in that way he believed he could render a better social service. In his thought, God was neither a person nor a spirit, but a force. Having no satisfactory idea of spirits he had banished the thought of them entirely from his mind.

All through my own period of doubt I conceived of God's spirit on earth as something emanating from a glorious spiritual *form* in heaven. Thinking that this form in heaven was a spirit made it only the easier to believe that God himself could appear to men if He cared to do so. That He did not care to appear to His children and thereby settle the question of His existence beyond all doubt seemed preposterous. And it would still seem so to my moral sense, if I retained my former conception of spirit. Of course He should not come near enough to " consume us," but He might come near enough to convince us.

The " New Thought " people, struggling with the meaning of spirit, have arrived at the conclusion that there is just *" One universal substance called spirit."* So, God is not to them *a* spirit, but simply spirit, " a universal substance."

Two or three other cults believe that man's spirit is simply his physical breath.

To say that God is a spirit, then, with any of these gross conceptions in mind, is sadly to misconceive Him.

Whether we say God is a Spirit, a Soul, or a Person, our meaning is the same. Of these three expressions, however, the word *Person* is the best because, being the scholar's term, it is clearly defined. So when we have learned the signification of the word *Person,* we shall attribute the same meaning to all three words, using them interchangeably.

In speaking of God as a person the scholar never has in mind either form or substance, however rarefied. He does not know even that there is material substance, much less spiritual substance. He knows very well what personality is as experience, but beyond that he knows nothing about it. Personality, to him, means *a Will that knows itself,* and then knows *Other Wills.* When we say that God is a Spirit, or Person, we should mean that He is a *Loving Intelligent Will.* In speaking of God as the Soul of the universe we should have in mind the same idea.

There is no harm in thinking of God as a force if the force is intelligent, and knows itself; but a force that does not know that it is a force, is not God. A progressive Jewish rabbi expressed the wish that we could get rid of the word God altogether, and substitute some such word as "Cosmos." When asked if the "Cosmos" knew that it was a cosmos, or that we were talking about it, he replied that he did not think so. "Then I would rather worship you," I said, "than your cos-

mos, for you would at least know that I reverenced you."

An intelligent lawyer friend of mine once said to me, "Of course I do not believe in a personal God." I asked him if he meant that he did not believe in a God who has a *form* in heaven. But he answered:

"Oh, no, no, I have been beyond that for twenty-five years! God, if He means anything, means the infinite, while a person means the limited. Now, who ever heard of such a childish thing as a limited infinite? No, pig-iron, as much as anything, is God."

I replied, "With all your intelligence, you haven't the remotest idea of what constitutes personality. You are not aware that by personality we mean a certain type of experience, and not a substance. Personality is realized only as the experience of self-knowledge is achieved. You are not as yet much of a personality, you are hardly more than a candidate for the office, but by making a good campaign you may get elected. You are not very personal because you are not very self-knowing, and if you should drop the plummet into the depths of your experience to sound yourself, by that very act you would acquire new depth, and would need to try again to fathom yourself. So at best, you are only becoming personal. None but the Infinite Experience can know itself perfectly, and therefore, God alone is completely personal."

My friend had no idea either of God's personality or his own, and his philosophical conception of nature was only a little less crude.

It was a long step in the right direction when I came to realize that I had never seen my mother, with whom I lived for so many happy years. Yet there was one thing that I felt sure I knew — absolutely, as I knew nothing else — and that was my mother. Not her face, not her voice, not her attitudes nor her actions, though all these I knew too and loved. But back of all these there was a real mother, of whom these were only manifestations. And this real mother, that I knew as I knew nothing else, was silent, and invisible. And then I found that I knew myself too — hardly as well as I knew my mother, but in the same way, and I knew myself also to be invisible and silent. My spirit, or personality, is as invisible and silent as God. I have no more seen myself than I have seen Him. Neither has my naked soul ever made a sound. All the words that my soul desires expressed are produced by a sort of animated phonograph which we call the mouth. At the wish of my invisible self the physical organs of speech set the air vibrating, but my self-conscious Will is eternally silent. There is much to be said about the relation of Personalities to their instruments, but this must be left until a little later. It will avoid confusion if we try to take but one step at a time.

Great scholars may think that such ideas as I have endeavored to illustrate are too simple to require statement, nevertheless the recognition of these simple facts concerning my mother and myself unlocked my prison door. It revolutionized everything within me, and without me. During the thirty years of my active ministry, it has been

the moulding thought of my life. Once realizing that God was a "Loving Intelligent Will," I no longer thought of Him as sitting on a throne, or showing His face through parted clouds. This conception of spirit gave to everything new shape and color. It was the idea around which a new heaven and a new earth took form. The rest of this book must further explain what it then meant, and still means, to me. As the result of a better conception of spirit, my world was relieved of intolerable intellectual burdens. Simply to get the idea, however, is not enough; one must follow it out logically to see where it will lead him.

To the question, "What is God?" I once more answer that He is a Loving Intelligent Will. And, apart from His instruments, He is silent and invisible, here and everywhere, now and always.

2. Who is God?

First, allow me to say that He is *not* the Father of our bodies, though He is the Creator of them. God created trees, but He is not the Father of trees. Fatherhood, in addition to creation, implies likeness so close that father and child classify as members of the same family. Our bodies were not made in the image of God.

While passing through my Sunday school where a college woman was giving some supplementary work, I heard her teaching the young people that we were made in the image of God because we had two legs instead of

four, and stood on end. "Why in the name of conscience," I thought, "do we permit anyone in our churches to retain such detrimental and absurd ideas?" This woman was what the young men and women called a "crackerjack" in her college line. So I was amazed at her crude conceptions, until I realized that she had never heard an exposition of the primitive story in Genesis. I also remembered that I had heard it preached from a pulpit, that man was in the image of God because he had a face, and walked upright instead of going on all fours. Those churches that believe man has no spirit except his breath are necessarily confined to this monstrous idea; while many in our regular churches are in a maze of tangled thoughts.

According to Scriptures, *God is the Father of spirits.* The "Loving Intelligent Will" is the Father of other loving intelligent wills. This makes every created spirit a God-child, or a child of God. These terms must be interchangeable, unless we are playing at "make-believe," when we say that a spirit is a child of God. Were not all spirits members of the God family, it would be useless to teach them about God; for, being of a different order, they would not understand. It is impossible to teach a horse the things of a man, because he has not the spirit of a man. I believe in an anthropomorphic God, simply because I believe in a Theomorphic man. God must be in man's image, because man is in God's image. But it is not the animal man in whose image God is.

I should never believe in a religion that I was incapable of experiencing. Neither could I experience a religion that was contrary to my reason. Nevertheless, mine is not a private religion, because I am an infinite debtor to the world's best thought, and to the world's best experience. Without the help of the ages I never could have thought or felt that which I cannot avoid thinking and feeling at the present time. This is not an effort to prove anything, but simply an attempt to picture what I see and feel, with the hope that someone else may see and feel in the same way.

The great pity of it all is that so many people have never *known* the world's best religious thought and experience. There are those, a thousand years behind their age, who are launching new religions or fostering old ones, who are utterly oblivious to the strata upon strata of human achievement above them.

Yes, God is the Father of *all spirits,* whether they reside on earth, or in heaven, or in hell. When once the meaning of spirit, or personality, is realized there is no dodging the issue. If a horse goes down the street keeping company with himself after this manner, "Now I am an old horse, and I ought to be a good old horse, and I wonder what the end will be," then he too is a son of God and our brother, though he has four, instead of two legs. I do not think a horse so keeps company with himself, but if he does, then we must own him and hope for the time when our brother will have something better than a quadruped for an instrument.

I am often asked what angels are like. That is an easy question. An angel is very much like my wife. For they both are spirits, and children of God. My wife is a sister of all the angels, and if Milton's great, classical devil exists, he also is our brother, and a child of God. All spirits are children of God, whether good or bad, just because they are spirits.

In speaking of sons, the Bible usually means the good children of God; yet it clearly teaches that prodigals are likewise sons. Earthly parents are our older brothers and sisters, honored and much beloved; but only God is the Father of our spirits. No one need fear that natural sonship to God makes it less imperative that we should become good sons. To be a bad son of God is a most wretched and deplorable thing in itself, and leads inevitably to all deserved punishment. A good Father will not be slack in discipline. And furthermore, the rebellious sons of God are not slow to make hell in this life, and that they will make no more hell after death we may not dare to believe.

If the truth about the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of all spirits could enter the minds of the people with all that it involves, it would break the heart of the Church, and, we may believe, the heart of the world as well. As yet, however, this truth is but dimly realized. I once had a dear old friend, a saint, whom I greatly appreciated. With her white hair and charming accent she was beautiful. Her mind was richly stored with beautiful poetry, and her apt quotations often

touched me deeply. Loving all the saints, she was equally loved by them. But one day I learned that my dear old saint was a saint only in spots — yet she was a saint. The discovery came about in this way; I asked her if she knew of the family with four children across the way, who had lately come to her neighborhood, suggesting that she might be useful to them. Now, what do you think my dear old saint said? With a spasmodic jerk of the elbow, and a toss of the head, she replied, "No! I don't want to know such folks!" This was a case in which caution was unnecessary, and where real service might have been rendered. For the time being my friend had completely forgotten that her neighbors were God's little ones and her own brothers and sisters. She had forgotten that her Father was over there struggling and suffering to save His children from sin and harm, and that He sorely needed His older daughter over the way to help Him. My dear old saint would not go across the street to help her Father whom she thought she loved so dearly. She did not realize that God was the Father of all spirits, and that all they were members of one family. My dear old friend has long since gone to her home beyond, and has learned how sadly she failed to comprehend the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. This knowledge doubtless gives her many a heartache, and drives her forward with new zeal to learn the lesson that God is the Father of *all spirits.*

We may be proud of our family name and social standing; we may think that we are different and apart, but

we should remember that no one ever had more disreputable children than God. All the bad people are His sons and daughters. True, they have dishonored His name, and grieved His heart, yet He does not disown them; rather He follows them into all the dens and haunts of vice asking them to return home. And as fast as we become good sons, we join the Father in His love quest for His prodigal sons, who are our brothers.

Possibly I am a direct descendant of King Swain of Denmark who conquered England in the tenth century. There is no evidence to that effect, but he is the first Swain of whom I know in history. However this may be, with every other self-conscious being I can lift my head and say with justifiable pride and gladness of heart, "God, who makes the world, is my Father." How wonderful you are, O God-child! and what a pity it would be if anything should drag you down from your divine possibilities!

3. Where is God?

When I once asked a company of young people where my spirit was they promptly answered,

"In your body." I inquired,

"In a part of my body, or in all of it? Am I to understand that my spirit is just the shape and size of my body, and that when I am thin of flesh my spirit is not as large as when I am fleshy?"

"No," said they, "we do not like that."

"Oh! your spirit is in your brain," remarked one young fellow.

"Now, then, I have it," said I, "my spirit is just the shape and size of the cavity in my skull."

"No," he replied, "we don't know how it is." And they did not know, because no one had explained it to them. This is what I told them:

"The spirit is not in the body as a hand is in a glove, for that is one *thing* inside another *thing*. Spirit has no dimensions. If any boy has a rule in his pocket let him measure my 'conscious will,' and tell me how long it is." They promptly replied that it could not be done. So I continued:

"If my self-conscious will occupies no space, then I, the spirit, am neither in my body nor out of my body. I am nowhere. 'Where' applies to things and not to spirit. The book is in the room because it occupies a definite space. When we say that our spirits are in our bodies we simply mean that our wills are capable of commanding our bodies and making them act. *While our spirits are nowhere, yet they do get expressed somewhere.* For all practical purposes, spirits are where their instruments express them in time and space."

At this point in my remarks, I turned aside, and poked sharply with my forefinger a friend who stood near. In reply to his inquiring look I said:

"I did not poke you. It was this finger." (Then to the boys) "Did I poke him? My finger touched him because I wished it. My will got expressed right at the

end of the finger, and therefore that is where my spirit seemed to be."

Again I punched my friend, but this time with a long stick, and when he turned sharply about, I said:

"I did not jab you, it was the stick. But the stick," I explained, "had become the instrument of my will; therefore my will got expressed at a greater distance from my body. The stick was really the lengthening of my finger."

I then told them of the man in Virginia who was talking by wireless telephone. It is reported that when he spoke, one man in Paris, and another in Honolulu, replied at the same time, as if he were in both places:

"Hello, Jake, is that you?" Had there been a million receivers in the encircling space with people listening, it would have seemed to every one of them that he was present. Though expressed in a million remote places at one time, he would not have been divided into a million persons; neither would he have been spread out to reach all the places occupied by his listeners. His instruments would have been spread out, but not his soul. His soul would still have remained sharply self-conscious. That concentrated, self-conscious will is what we mean by the soul. The soul is always a definite, personal will, to itself and to the one or the many with whom it is communicating, however short or extended its instruments.

That the young people grasped this conception of spirit, was made evident in a subsequent review.

So to the question, "Where is God?" we must answer that, as naked spirit, He is not anywhere, but that His instruments may express Him everywhere. Where His instruments end, or whether nature ends at all, no scientist knows. The Divine Spirit is no larger than the human spirit, for neither of them has any largeness at all. God is simply more conscious, more loving, and more intelligent than we; and His instruments are infinitely more vast than ours. Developing a soul is not making it larger, but making it more loving, intelligent, and purposeful. However, the development of the soul does require the enlargement of its instruments. An undeveloped person may be very conscious of his body and its wants and scarcely at all aware of his soul and its needs. To be infinitely self-knowing, like God, is the most concentrated and intensified reality conceivable. So the minister's wife of whom we have spoken, was mistaken in thinking God a rarified substance like ether, spread out to fill all nature. With her materialistic conception of God, she thought Him so spacially big that she could neither know Him nor love Him, whereas He is no more spread out than the mathematical point that has no dimensions. To give complete satisfaction to our friend, it will be necessary to show her the various ways of approaching this Loving Will, the Father of her own invisible self; but for this we are not yet ready.

Dr. Lyman Abbott tells of sitting at the table one day with his little grandson when the latter said, "'Grandfather, how can God be in Cornwall and in Newburgh at

the same time?' I touched him on the forehead and said, 'Are you there?' 'Yes.' I touched him on the shoulder, 'Are you there?' 'Yes.' I touched him on the knee, 'Are you there?' 'Yes.' 'That is the way,' I replied, 'God can be in Cornwall and in Newburgh at the same time.' He considered a moment, and shyly smiled his assent."

I am well aware that we have not said enough about God to make Him satisfyingly near and personal to our love; but it is a start, and we still have the pleasure of traveling together over a beautiful road until we shall stand face to face with Him whom our souls seek. We should reach this desired goal in the fourth chapter. But if we become impatient, we shall spoil the journey, for we are traveling as fast as we can go without having a wreck.

Here, a little incident from actual experience may be helpful. My eldest son, when a little child, would not say a prayer. This, beyond doubt, was abnormal, because most little children are willing to pray. As my own religious life had given me so much trouble, I concluded that he had inherited my frailties, and not his mother's virtues. Being perplexed by his attitude I would sometimes take him out to see the stars, when I would speak of the greatness and goodness of God. Then, once in awhile, though not often, I could get him to pray. We did not wish him to be unduly serious, certainly not solemn, but it did puzzle us to know why he would not say a prayer. So one day when he came into my study

I thought, "Now is my chance." Taking him up, I set him on the desk before me, which permitted him to look out of the window upon the apple trees that were a bower of beauty in their spring blossoms.

"Isn't this a beautiful world?" I said.

"Yes," was his reply.

"Who made it?"

"God."

"Well, wouldn't it be nice to pray a little?" I asked.

"Oh," with a tone of aversion, "I don't want to pray!"

"You don't like to talk to God?"

"Huh!" scornfully. "I can't *talk* to God, He's up in heaven."

"No, God is in your heart." At that he rose to his knees and said, with an incredulous look on his face:

"Well, I guess I can't jump into my mouth!" This made me feel that he was born a little pagan, but at the same time it gave me one clue to the difficulty. He made a difference between talking and praying. That he liked to talk, I knew, but now it appeared that, to his mind, offering prayers to some one so far away was quite a different thing. Then I asked him if he thought I loved him.

"Yes, I know you love me," he said, putting his arms about my neck, and giving me a squeeze.

"Well," I asked, "can you see my love?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure you can see it?"

"Why, of course."

"Well, then, put your hand on it."

"I can't *see* your love, but,— I know you love me, though!"

"Yes, you do know that I love you, but you can't see my love, neither can you see *me*."

"Yes, I can!"— and his hand literally flew to my cheek.

"Oh, no, that is not papa; that is flesh. You didn't think I was flesh, did you? No, you can't see me because I am love, or spirit." Here I carefully felt of his head, saying, "Now, that is a bone box, but I don't talk to a bone box when I talk to you." Next, feeling of his ear, I remarked, "Isn't that a funny little thing, a piece of gristle!— but I don't talk to gristle when I speak to you." Bringing my hand down over his face, I continued, "Here is some flesh with bones under it, but I don't talk to flesh and bones when I talk to you. No, I can't *see* you. Yet, my love *knows* your love, and your love knows my love. When my love feels your love, then we say you are in my heart; and when our love feels God's love, then He is in our hearts. Isn't it beautiful, that my love knows and likes to talk to your love, and your love knows and likes to talk to my love, and that we like to talk to God's love?" He didn't wait for me to ask him to pray, but at once began in a loud whisper, saying:

"O God, help me to be a good boy, and to love papa and mamma, and everybody, and to do everything that is

good." Then looking up with a smile, he asked, "Do you know what I was doing?" I said:

"I think you were talking to the Lord." With evident satisfaction he admitted that he was.

Two days after this he came into my study while I was reading a book and put his hand on my knee. Giving my knee a hard shove, he said:

"This isn't papa, is it? This is papa's *body.*" My book went out of the way in a hurry, I can assure you, and there was a dear little upturned face smiling, which said, "We are spirits, aren't we, papa?" Never after that did he refuse to pray.

Some years ago a successful minister, about forty-five years of age, consecrated, eloquent, and revered by his people, asked me how I conceived of God when I prayed. The conversation revealed the fact that he was struggling with all the questions that troubled the little boy. This unhappy condition was due to the fact that theology begins too far down the stream, leaving unanswered and unconsidered the best questions of all, the questions of children and fools.

Once, when a little child, I was told by my mother that God saw all my naughty thoughts. Immediately, I asked, "Where is God?" She answered, "Everywhere." "In the sky?" "Yes." "In this house?" "Yes." "In the logs of the walls?" "Yes." "In the table leg?" "Yes." "If I were to saw the table leg off, would I hurt God?" "Sh-h, be careful what you say about God."

That last question was as legitimate as the previous ones, and was asked with equal sincerity. It clearly revealed my materialistic conceptions of God. My present opinion is that it would not give Him pain to saw off the leg of a table, but that it would give Him pain to amputate a human leg. God knows the thrill of a nerve better than we do, or else He has much to learn.

A relative, visiting in my home, remarked that she was utterly confused about God; and that she had been reading some of the new cults of the day with the hope of finding something satisfying. Consequently, a little conversation followed on how God was immanent in all nature. So, when she put her little boy to bed that night, she told him that God was not away off in heaven but near, and in everything that was good. To this the little fellow replied, "Oh, gee! then He is in strawberry shortcake, isn't He?" The poor mother was at the end of her wits, and felt that the devotion which followed was not very successful. We teach that God is in everything, without comprehending how He is in anything, and herein lies the difficulty.

The question of how God is in nature was again before us. Some one suggested, "If He is in strawberry shortcake, is He likewise in the garbage can?" "Horrors!" exclaimed another. A third voice, "*Now* where are we! — do we believe, or do we not believe that God is in all nature?"

A garbage can may be most repulsive if allowed to breed life; yet chemically and biologically viewed, its con-

tents are more beautiful than any fairyland ever described. The odor and sight are repugnant to us, because the refuse is not wholesome food for human beings; but to some other animals it is more delicate than a perfume bottle. The other animals would probably think the perfume horrid stuff. The "Loving Intelligent Will" is not in nature in the same way that strawberries are in shortcake. After that manner God is neither in nor out of anything. This, however, will be made more plain in the consideration of the next question.

Whether or not the reader likes these illustrations, at least they are out of the raw experience of life, and reveal the crude conceptions that linger concerning God and His relations to the universe. A child can ask many of the vital questions concerning religion and life before he can count ten; and if his questions are answered, he will ask almost all the religious questions before he has learned the multiplication table. This is because nothing else is so near to him as life and religion. The mathematical faculty is a later development.

I should never crowd a child in his acquisition of religious knowledge; but when he wants to know, if we ourselves know the way, it is much better to start him on the right track.

4. What does God do?

"What does God do all day?" asked a little boy of his mother.

We used to think that He made the universe in a week, and that ever since He had been keeping Sunday. During this long Sabbath we believed Him to be engaged in religious work; though He may have regulated the universe a bit now and then. Now, however, we see that nothing is finished. Even new worlds are being formed, and the old ones are constantly being changed. It is deeper truth to recognize God as making the universe all the time, to think of nature as God at work. For, should God cease working there would be no world. We used to say, and rightly, too, that the world is crammed so full of meaning and purpose that it must have had a wise Creator; that there never could have been such a world without a God. With equal propriety, we may now say that there could no more be a God without a world than a world without a God; because a God who was so indolent and purposeless as to think nothing, and feel nothing, and project nothing, would not be worthy of a second thought.

At last we have come to the point where we can see how science, in a peculiar way, has saved religion. Men have always been pondering over God's relation to the wonderful forces of nature that envelop us. They could get along pretty well with either a God or a world, but found it difficult to harmonize both thoughts. There appeared to be a spirit world over against the great lump of a dirt world. The *bulk* of things often seemed such a hindrance that men dreamed of deliverance by ultimately getting rid of the material universe altogether.

Even God, it was thought by some philosophers, did the best He could with the stubborn clay at His disposal. When my brother was killed, I could not decide whether God or the great machine world killed him. Just when the world acted, or just when God acted, was to me a profound mystery. For, in my thought, the world was a great automatic machine, that ran entirely by itself, except when God occasionally interfered. Whether He was a sort of spiritual ether penetrating all things, or what, I could not at all decide. But like the Yale professor, I still believed that if He existed, He must have a *visible* nucleus all His own in heaven. God, at the center, was a ghost, whom His ghost children would find only after death. According to the common teaching, Jesus had left His Father and happy home in heaven, having come to this sinful earth to be clothed with a physical body. Of course, the Father's spirit was represented as being with Jesus, but the Father Himself had remained in His far-away home. So my confusion was worse confounded by thinking.

During many centuries, scholars were grappling with the thought of spirit; and they did some good thinking in spite of their mistakes. Spirit was being more and more clearly defined. It increasingly appeared to be a self-conscious will, but how this Infinite Will was related to the great lump of nature, was the supreme difficulty.

Finally the scientists took the lump into the laboratories, when behold! it melted as quickly as a lump of sugar

melts in the mouth of a boy. They discovered that nature was no lump at all, but a bundle of beautiful, complex energies. Nature as *substance* scientists have driven to the vanishing point; so much so that no great physicist would dare to say that there is any substance. Yet nature was never so potent in the lives of men as since it has been reduced to invisible energies. The knowledge of these invisible forces and the power to manipulate them make men almost like gods in their achievements.

The present situation, then, is a little like that of putting the tunnel under the Hudson. One gang beginning on the Jersey side, and another on the New York side, they bored down and onward, sometimes going far below the water; but when the workers came together under the Hudson, they had varied from each other only by the least fraction of an inch. Just so the philosophers and theologians began on the spirit side, reducing spirit to purposeful energy; while the scientists began on the nature side reducing it to purposeful energy; and when the two sets of workers broke through, they were apparently at the same point. The Christian scholar looked up with joy and amazement, saying, "Why, this invisible, purposeful energy of nature is simply what God is thinking, and feeling, and willing. Whether there is any *substance* we do not know, but whether there is, or is not, *nature is Will in action.* God continually purposes all these energies and they go forth. Light-energy, and all other

beautiful forces constituting nature, are the modes of God's continuous will."

"What does God do all day?" Why, everything that is being done in the universe, except that which other wills are doing. And the child will is only combining his Father's energies and thinking his Father's thoughts. The child never works apart from his Father's enfolding powers. If we could comprehend all the dynamics of the universe, we should know what God is doing on *that plane* of His activities. Or, if we could know all His loving thoughts and higher purposes concerning His children, who are striving and building in the midst of these simple, enfolding energies, we should know what God is doing in the *moral realm.* The wall of partition is broken down, the veil is rent in twain; we live in the Holy Presence, since there is no other place to live. With Browning, we feel that the atmosphere "Is the clear, dear breath of God who loveth us." The pavement on which we walk is the power of the Great Will bearing us up. Likewise, the buildings along the street are more of His beneficent energies, providing shelter and rest for His loved ones. Our bodies are also His energies, highly sensitized, through which we become beautifully aware of our surroundings. All the vitality in the quivering beams of ships, and all the propelling force in their engines, is but the power of a Will, and that Will is the Father of our spirits. Leaving out of mind for the present the thought of the vast universe, measure, if you can, the ocean in its breadth and depth, which in

its ceaseless rising and falling raises and lowers ship-cities as if they were snowflakes; and then remember that, if rightly applied, there is power enough in each cup full of water to destroy a ship, and that all the energy of the boundless worlds is but the will of Him in whom we "live and move and have our being." Having done this, if you are not something less than a man, you will fall down and adore in wonder, love and praise. To be brought face to face with God in the beauty and awfulness of nature is the only cure for the irreverence of this generation.

But some one says, "This makes God too great. Have you looked, and staggered before the limitless heavens?" Yes, but is it not claimed that God is Infinite? — and we have not yet found the equal of infinity. With all our insistence upon the infinitude of God, perhaps it offends some to think of Him as being equal to His universe,— or even to the little part of it that we can imagine. However, God must be greater than all His works.

This is pantheism, says another. No, pantheism though containing many beautiful truths is, nevertheless, a golden mist. Its advocates have eliminated personality, they have broken the mast of their ship, and all the riggings have fallen down with it. Being the perpetual cause of all things, Self-conscious Will is the greatest fact in the universe. There is a clear distinction between God and His deeds, even as there is a distinction between myself and what I am now thinking and doing. This

Creative Will is what the intelligent Christian means by the term God. He conceives of this Will of the universe as being the Father of all other wills. We are not to think of God as making a dirt planet which He has tossed off into space as something separate from His will. He never put His children on such an isolated Earth as that would be, to roam about and care for themselves as best they might. The world is the complex energy of His will never-ceasing, with which He enfolds His children. He carries them in His loving powers and will not let them go. This is His cosmic relation to us; but it is by no means the only relation which He sustains to His children. His more personal relationship is equally beautiful and necessary.

Something like this twofold relationship exists between man and man. We know that it is best for us to build railroads, though many are sure to be killed by them however careful we may be. Yet we should be something more than railroad operators; we should be personal friends and, if occasion should arise, minister to the wants of those who are injured by our railroads.

So God must either will a cosmos, or not will it. He cannot obliterate a part of the world, every time one of His wilful or ignorant children gets in the way. It is not even best for His children that He should do so. It is far better to have a definite and orderly world, though it may hurt many. Yet God never forsakes His injured children, but leads them out of their injuries into something better, if they are willing.

Comforting as these thoughts are, we must yet travel a long way before we come to a completely satisfying idea of God. However, this is not discouraging, because we like to travel when the prospect grows more pleasing at each stage of the journey.

Some think there must be a dirt world because they see it. In a way I seem to see my wife when I look at her picture; yet I only see a bit of paper irregularly faded. Likewise a shining light appears to be a complete thing in itself, whereas the sun, doubtless, is as dark as blackness. The light which the scientist studies is waves of energy, traveling at the rate of one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles per second, but that is not the sweet something that we experience as light. The light coming from the sun is not shiny until our sensations are added. And even then, it is our feelings that are brilliant because our nerves were struck by these rapid waves of energy. When we think we see a real face, it is only a shadow on the retina of the eye; which eye is only another bundle of energies, and not the substance that it appears to be.

We live in a picture world, produced by God's energies beating upon other energies which He has intimately associated with our wills. We thank God for these pictures because they are the visible language of "loving intelligent wills," wills that in themselves are silent and invisible. Yet these wills are known in consciousness as a bit of final reality. They are like unto God who causes the vital energies that result in the pictures of a

living, rational experience. Experience, therefore, with its inner consciousness and its outer symbol, or picture, is all we know. So when they would take us out of personal experience into a universal "substance" called spirit, they are offering to take us out of the known into the unknown; for they do not know whether there is any substance.

"Why, then," some may ask, "does God combine His energies to form a poisonous rattlesnake?" God has expressed everything imaginable; the beautiful and ugly, the safe and harmful, the pleasant and painful, the gentle and terrible, and all these are but the alphabet of a soul. If He had given us nothing but abstract definitions, we never should have learned the meaning of anything; and scarcely more, if He had given us only the beautiful and pleasant without their opposites. But He has made us *feel* the meaning, so that it may be real to us. From this marvelous alphabet which He has provided, we learn to spell, then to read, and finally to live. When we have learned the meaning of poison and its opposite, we may kill the rattlesnake, or cause its energies to dissolve and pass into something more beautiful and safe. Thus we become more and more immune from all that is ugly and harmful, and more appreciatively attached to all that is beautiful and good. The ugly and harmful were desirable things to know in contrast with the beautiful and good, that we might reject the one, and cleave to the other. The deeper meaning of things thus learned will give significance to our beautiful world long after

we have passed beyond the evil which we have come to loathe. I am entirely convinced that this so-called evil world with its epidemics, earthquakes, and cyclones is the best conceivable place in which to *begin* a soul; not the best possible world as yet, for it is our business to help make it better. Neither should we forget that the terrible is often the overture to us of some mighty, beneficent energy which we have not yet learned to use.

Again we affirm that God is doing everything that occurs in the universe, except those things which are being done by His children. Nothing ever occurs that is not directly or indirectly the act of some will.

5. If the Ancients made their gods, how do we know that we are not making our God?

Doubtless, the great fallacy in this question is the supposition that the Ancients made their gods. No one ever made his God or his gods; for all men have the same identical God, living and moving and having their being in Him. They have Him regardless of whether they know either His name or His character. Since there is no other God or thing to have, all must have Him. Neither can they avoid being conscious of Him, nor escape having opinions concerning Him. All religious opinions, however sane or grotesque, are about the same God. The Ancients, being conscious of our God and their God, were sometimes comforted by His presence, while at other times they were greatly frightened.

As they could not escape Him they tried to explain Him; and in the act of explaining, they made a theology and not a god. Whoever expresses a religious opinion is guilty of starting a theology. Even the Ancients were moved by an objective reality, and not by a mere idea. Though their idea often failed to describe the reality with accuracy, yet if the reality had disappeared, the idea would have perished from among them. It seemed to them that there was a god of thunder and, according to our interpretation of the universe, there was; for if our God had not been there thundering, they never would have thought of a god of thunder. Neither were they mistaken when they thought there was a god of harvest; because our God was there making their harvests grow as He does ours, and was feeding them as He feeds us. We all make worse mistakes than that. These crude men may be excused for thinking that a crashing thunderstorm was a big enough task for one god; or that the fructifying of all vegetation was ample employment for another.

Those early men worshiped our God in divided form simply because they could not think of a God great enough to carry on all the diverse activities which they beheld. Another reason why these crude children conceived of Him as many gods was that they could not understand how one person could be so gentle and terrible at the same time. Nevertheless, they would not have had gentle and terrible gods if our God had not been both gentle and terrible. They, therefore, no more

made their gods than they made their stars. Their gods were our God, and their stars were our stars. We call their theology mythology, and their astronomy astrology. Yet mythology is crude theology, and astrology is unscientific astronomy. Astrology arose because men were influenced by real stars, and were impelled to offer such explanations as they were able. Without astrology we never would have had astronomy. In like manner men were disquieted by the same Infinite Power that disturbs us to-day, and were moved by that Power to offer their best interpretation. But without their mythology we never would have had our theology. The development of astronomy will never cease while there are intelligent men for stars to shine upon. Nor will the idea of God cease to expand while men are enfolded in the vast purposeful energy called the universe.

Our early brothers were trying to comprehend and interpret our God who was as present to them as He is to us. And here we are in the year nineteen hundred and twenty, A. D., still trying to expound Him; because the need is not less now than then. Those who know most about God best realize the need of knowing more. When we no longer try to increase our knowledge of God, we shall cease to love Him.

6. May we not be communing with a mere idea?

No, that is impossible. Because, whatever it is, it is at least an objective reality. Its grip is that of the

universe. We can not let it go because it will not let us go. We are worshiping more than an idea; we are worshiping what we live in; we call it God; we think it is "Loving Intelligent Will." We believe that the power that enfolds us knows itself and us. And that we are not mistaken in this, our assurance deepens as our knowledge increases. We find that if we do not neglect or stultify any portion of our nature, our insight grows. If we invest our all on the conception of a spiritual universe we get astonishing results to the individual and to society. Then follows more insight and the incentive to invest again our talents that have doubled in the using of them. Of this, however, we shall have more to say later. For the present suffice it to say, the object of my worship is the great reality; all the reality there is, except my will and the other wills whom I call brothers. To state clearly what we mean, before trying to tell why we believe it, is of the utmost importance. With an experimental knowledge of God, and with ideas of the universe that harmonize therewith, our heads and hearts are thoroughly anchored in Him. If our every line of vision converges to this end, our insight gives us God as the great enfolding reality. Our further task is to make the idea of God clear and to show how the lines of vision converge. In this task, modern knowledge is the Christian's best ally.

CHAPTER III

DOES MAN HAVE A SOUL, AND WHAT IS HIS PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE?

What is man?
Who is man?
Would the absence of man cripple God?
What could an infinite God care for such a little speck?
Is not socialism the best religion there is?

1. What is man?

We do not fully know "what" and "where" God is until we know what man is, and how God and man are working through each other. Our knowledge of God grows with our knowledge of man. We can understand neither without knowing both. At every stage of the discussion our subject is made complex by the intertwining of the human and the Divine. Hence, this chapter — while introducing man — takes us deeper into the life of God.

Man does not have a soul. Neither does the sun set. Though we know better, yet for convenience, we continue to speak of the sun as setting. For the same reason we still say that man has a soul when we mean that he is a soul. Soul is person, body is instrument. The

instrument does not have the person, the person has the instrument. The soul is the child of God. How strangely, therefore, it would sound to ask: Does a man have a child of God? The reverse question, however, is perfectly fitting: Does a child of God have a body?

Man is a spirit, a soul, or a person. All men are alike in that which constitutes them personalities, or self-conscious wills. It is in their individuality that men differ. In the first place, some are more developed than others; and then they have different tastes, different knowledge, different temperaments, and different occupations. This diversity of individuality clearly distinguishes one man from another, and at the same time greatly enriches society.

Like his Father, man is *a loving intelligent will.* Like Him, too, he is always silent and invisible, save as his instruments express his thought and wish in time and space. So far, Father and child should be defined in the same terms; for however they may differ in other respects, they are alike in being self-conscious. If either is below self-conscious will, he is something less than a person. Though man, as we find him, is not always so very loving, nor so very intelligent, yet that is what he is in his best estate. So far as we can understand, the sinless man soul lifted to the infinite power would be the same as God. This spiritual definition does not imply that either God or man exists, or could exist, without form and outward expression.

2. Who is man?

We think of Man, the soul, as a child of God, or a god-child. Therefore, he is worthy of his brother's highest esteem, and his Father's tenderest affection. He is a very son of the infinite God; and all created spirits, being his brothers, are members of one family. Again we say, "O god-child, how wonderful you are, and what a pity it would be if you failed to recognize your divinity, or allowed anything to drag you down from your divine possibilities!" Man must know himself if he would attain unto the goal of life.

Though man *is* a soul, yet without the body he cannot so much as come to self-consciousness. Just how or when a soul begins, we do not know; but it does not appear until some time after the body is born. A new-born babe can neither see, feel, nor hear, with any intelligent meaning of the words. It will stare into the most glaring light without intelligence enough to shut its eyes. It does not recognize objects for some time, and when it does, misses the object for which it reaches. The infant is likewise slow in distinguishing sounds or names. If the soul exists when the body is born, it is only a latent personality which has not yet come to self-realization. Personality is self-conscious will, and this the child has not yet achieved.

Let us here consider the relation of a new-born *body* to God and the universe. God begins His creative activities in what the scientists call stellar ether, where His

energies combine and recombine in a more and more complex world, until the solar system appears with planets in the condition of our earth. After more combinations and recombinations, out on the surface of all things His activities blossom in the finest bit of organism, the sensitized thing which we call the human body. This body, the flower of all God's activities in nature, requires all nature for its support. Furthermore, the chemical energies constituting the body itself are what God is thinking, and feeling, and doing. Strictly speaking, it is His body, the first instrument in the whole order of development, the only body on earth capable of articulate speech and loving deed. If God did not continually will the body and all the supporting energies of the universe, the body would cease to be. Before the man soul appears at all, we have God's world culminating in what we call the human body. When a man soul awakes, it is in God's own bosom, in His own body. Man awakens in God's enfolding energies, and not outside them; for outside of God he could not exist.

It is amusing to hear a little boy speak of his father's automobile as "my car"; but it isn't his, even though the father is pleased to see the little fellow spread himself in it and claim ownership. Yet it is his too, in the sense that the father gladly shares it with him. And some day when the child is too big to be a little boy, and too little to be a big boy, he may take his father's car and run it into the ditch. But even the wreck is his father's wreck. In the same way, if we live at all it is in our Fa-

ther's enfolding instrument. His body is ours because He gladly shares it with us. However, if we do not use it in harmony with His will, we wreck it in the ditch.

God wakes His child to consciousness in His own body, by making all kinds of impressions upon the sense organs. There are many rappings on the door, and flashes of light through the windows until the soul wakes. And when the soul becomes conscious, God may not cease beating upon the instrument with myriad forces, lest His child fall asleep.

Some morning when a loved form bends over the infant body, the baby smiles, and the soul begins to appear. That is a wonderful day when the baby gives its first smile. Little by little the child becomes aware of itself and of its mother. Should the baby be fortunate enough to have two or three brothers and sisters, he will learn some day, when he is a little older, that they all want the same thing at the same time. Then he will be very conscious of *other wills*.

We know that other wills exist because they live in our enveloping world, and constantly use it in a way that we approve or resent. If they did not know and disturb our world, we should not be aware of them even if they existed. We know that other wills exist because they sell us coats that they have made, and cut down trees in our forests, and shape them into things that have meaning for us and them. They modulate the atmosphere in which we live, producing sounds that stand for objects with which we are familiar. They learn our words and

facial expressions, and use them to make us feel happy or uncomfortable. Nature is the common instrument of all wills.

As we cannot come to the consciousness of ourselves, nor of other wills, except through the body and its environments, *neither can we develop the soul without cultivating the physical instrument and that which surrounds it.* There is always a corresponding development between soul and body. As Browning says,

"We know not whether soul helps body more than body helps soul."

We simply know that soul and body develop together, and that if either is injured the other is harmed. A physical change in our bodies takes place with every thought. We cannot silently love without disturbing the gray matter. We make paths through our nervous system with every thought and deed. If we had a means of photographing all the muscular and nervous conditions wrought in our bodies by our thoughts and actions, they would correspond to every growth of spirit. The face becomes beautiful with a beautiful soul, and the body becomes refined by every improvement of the spirit.

I once shook hands with the great French organist, Guilmant. When I clasped his hand I forgot everything else; the hand was so soft, and yet so firm! All the inspiration and purpose of his soul had been registered in his body. And what a hand it was! I shall never forget that touch. It gave new meaning to Tennyson's beautiful line, "Oh for the touch of a vanished hand!" Our

looks, smiles, accents, and very gait become the expression of the soul.

We once had a maid who came home in the dejected state following intoxication. When I appeared she said: "I has me faults the same as others, but me heart is all right." Now, could her heart be right and her body wrong? Can we have a pure soul and an unclean body? Can we have an honest heart and a pilfering hand? Certainly not. For as the pure soul cleanses the body, so the degraded body pollutes the soul. Soul and body must grow together,— and alike. Sometimes we speak of a purely spiritual experience apart from all physical excitability; but such a thing is impossible, because every spiritual thought has its beautiful, physical accompaniment. The physical may run riot, as with some musicians who are principally noise and bluster; but the fact still remains that the most bilious and cold philosopher enjoys his gentle nervous thrill.

All worthy education means the spiritualizing of the body. Both before death, and after, the good man has a spiritual body. Not a spirit body, but a spiritual, a refined and sensitive instrument of the spirit. Throughout eternity man will be spiritualizing his body, or else degrading it.

We soon outgrow our immediate bodies, and find it necessary to augment them with all the forces of nature. These enlarged bodies must likewise be spiritualized or they will pervert the soul,— as is proved by every degraded form of institutional life.

The early man dimly realized that if he could get a larger hand, he would be a greater man. So, augmenting his hand with a club, he achieved a new growth in mind and character. Finding himself a greater man, he tried once more to increase his hand. Next, finding a sharp stone with which he could hack down small trees, he created a new mental and moral demand for a still finer instrument of his spirit. Then, in turn, he augmented his hand with bronze and iron until all great thundering mills and all cunning tools appeared as the mighty hand of the human will. This required an enormous soul growth in knowledge and character, and a corresponding growth in social consciousness and self-consciousness. To further our soul growth there is still a pressing demand for enlarged instruments. So it must ever be an even race between soul growth and hand growth.

In the same way, man developed soul and legs. It became necessary to make swifter legs or suffer a dwarfing of his soul. Consequently, he increased his speed with camels and horses; but even these became inadequate for his soul's growth. Then ensued a race of soul and legs, until to-day automobiles, steam cars, and every means of swift locomotion are but the augmented legs of man. The growing man soul is still in quest of swifter means of locomotion, and as these appear society is changed to its very foundations. New trades, new mental powers, new moral conditions confront him everywhere; and still he is speeding up.

When man made for himself far-seeing eyes in the telescope, the heavens opened; and what he saw in the heavens made for him a new earth. Then making for himself a short-seeing eye in the microscope, he discovered within and beneath things a new world, which in turn was a vast commentary on the heavens above. Likewise it may be truthfully said that soul and eyes have made an even race in their development. The same is true of soul and ears. Said a great building contractor of Chicago thirty-five years ago, "No man in the past ever dreamed of such a business as we are conducting, for it would have been impossible without the telephone." The telephone is but the enlargement of man's ears and mouth. This contractor moved men and materials, at will, over a radius of a hundred miles. Even the musical soul found a new incentive when the mouth was enlarged by piano, pipe organ, and orchestra. Every enlargement of the mouth calls for new musical skill in complex technique, and in finer inspiration and fuller elaboration. In short, every man soul is in quest of omnipresence. Living as he does in his Father's enfolding energies, he can know himself, and grow himself, only so far as he makes the instruments of his Father's will the instruments of his own will. The man soul is in the process of taking on the whole universe as his enlarged body. Two hundred pounds is quite large enough for the little body which he ever carries, and cares for, but to be a growing son of God he must progressively make the universe his augmented body. At night he may lay off his big body and

rest; but in the morning he must put on his larger body, the universe, as he puts on his clothes and his boots, and go forth to live and work with God, his Father.

3. Would the absence of man cripple God?

Yes, the absence of man would thoroughly cripple God. Without the possibility of a family, God would just as well never have been. This is not an unbecoming or irreverent remark, but a statement that is very pleasing to God; it vindicates everything that is highest in His Holy Nature. His wisdom, character, and love are all involved in His purpose to have a family.

If we eliminate the thought of His family, what wisdom is there in anything God has made? The production of coal is a wonderful display of wisdom, love, and power; but apart from the thought of children who would discover the coal and put it to all its marvelous uses, what motive could there have been in such an act? God, as a solitary will in the universe, never intended to mine coal, warm houses, cook food, or fire engines. All the marvelous by-products of coal could have no value or meaning apart from a complex society; but with a family in mind the production of coal becomes a sacrament worthy of a God, and lays the foundation of a kingdom, all glorious in wisdom, love, and power.

Iron, likewise, has a rational, moral, and social significance beyond all power to express. Its uses, all the way from steel bridges and engines to the hair springs of

watches, suggest the imagination of a mind infinite and loving. The human family never could have climbed to glory except on an iron stair; but take away the family, and iron means nothing.

The large part that wood has supplied in the development and happiness of the race is beyond the imagination of any but an infinite mind. To what infinite uses it has been and may yet be put, from the homeliest utilities to organs and violins! Soft woods, hard woods, and precious woods have entered into the very warp and woof of human life. Wood is a miracle, robbed of its wonder because the gift is so lavish. Yet what sense would there be in creating wood in all its varieties, with no one to put it to any of its sacred uses? These same thoughts would equally apply to all the precious metals.

Why should God create a chemical world unless He had chemists in mind? What would it amount to if there were not those who could take nature apart and recombine it to infinity for His glory and their happiness? But there is no end to questions of this kind that might be asked concerning God and His works. In short, a depopulated universe is robbed of all its meaning and glory. Without a family, God would be reduced to a child god playing with a toy world. And being alone, He could not so much as complete His toy. At best the universe is but raw material until His children have turned it into a finished product. When God and His children begin turning nature into finished products the highest creation is just begun. By transforming nature

into a social institution that reflects God's wisdom and love, common nature is glorified. Without a family there is no sense in anything, and God Himself would be without moral worth or meaning. To be sure, He could get along without a few of us if we should utterly refuse to coöperate with Him; but without a loving family, God would be completely defeated. He "So loved the world," and with equal propriety it might be said He so needed the world, "that He gave His only begotten Son."

Before God's family arrived He was simply getting ready to do the supreme thing. But with His children about Him, loving and alert, the meaning of all things from the beginning commences to appear, and the glorious end is dimly discerned. No greater travesty on the nature of God could be conceived than that which makes Him independent of His children. And to think that God's desire for mere adoration is His chief need of man is but slightly less a travesty. God yearns for the love and adoration of His children, and with no less desire, He calls upon them to help Him carry forward His work of creation. Love without work and achievement is first insipid, and then stale. God can no more fulfill Himself without children than men can fulfill themselves without Him. If God's highest works fail Him, then God Himself has failed.

The permanent absence of children would stultify God's reason and character by rendering useless all that He is and all that He has made.

4. What could an infinite God care for such a little speck?

It would be interesting to know who originated this question, for he should wear the badge of his own ignorance. In his mind, the little "speck" probably signified the human body. But as we have already seen, that is not man; it is only his instrument. And besides, man may progressively augment his little body, causing it to articulate with the whole body of nature. Moreover, the human body is primarily God's, the flower of all His works in the vast unfolding universe. Does God care for these myriad blossoms of his universe? One might as well ask, "What could a horticulturist care for the little blossoms on his apple trees?" Let the insects sting them, or the frosts bite them, he has big *trees* to absorb his attention!

Unless God's world could blossom into myriad, delicate forms, as homes for man souls, the universe would be as useless as a barren apple tree. The little flower is not something apart, its production taxes the entire strength and purpose of the tree. Neither is the human body something apart, its production taxes the entire strength and purpose of the universe. As the flower is the tree's glory and promise of fruit, so the human body is nature's glory and promise of souls.

If, however, the "speck" refers to the real man, the spirit, then the question is equally foolish. An intelligent will is neither a "speck," nor something spread out like

ether. Furthermore, that which can be so deeply impressed by the vastness of the universe is not insignificant in itself. A mastodon would not be overwhelmed by the vastness of the universe. Neither is the great universe overwhelmed by a sense of its own magnitude. In his sense of awe, the foolish man who asked the question transcends the great universe itself. To be overwhelmed with our inability to know the universe is partly knowing it, or else we should not be so completely overwhelmed. That is not insignificant which can measure the distance to the stars, and weigh the planets, and mark out the shape and size of their orbits. That is not insignificant which can discover the very elements of which the sun is composed. Man's primary body may be relatively small, but it is so highly organized that he can augment it until his instrument reaches the stars. Though the sun is approximately ninety-three million miles from our earth, yet the intelligent mind of man discovered helium in the sun before he discovered it upon the earth. This feat of His child must have given the Father keen delight.

Man's body is potentially as great as the universe because, being so delicately organized, it can articulate with the world elements to the farthest sun that twinkles in the blue.

The Luther Burbanks are revealing our supremacy over the vegetable kingdom. The animal kingdom is known to be equally plastic under our shaping hand; for juggling with animal life is one of man's pastimes. By

using pressure, he has taken a single cell life and divided it into twins. He has taken two separate cells and formed them into a giant. Taking off the head and tail of some lower forms of life, he has made the head grow where the tail was, and vice versa.

No one mind can find time to learn of all the wonders achieved by the human family in the realms of nature and of social well-being. A simple statement of man's achievements in the twenty or thirty allied sciences is more thrilling than all the romances ever written. Man's power for good or evil is stupendous and overwhelming. It is in the realm of human life that God Himself will be victorious, or else defeated. All creation will fail if man fails. I here speak of man in the sense of God's children, wherever they may be in the universe. The people on this earth might fail without bringing universal disaster; but if God's children throughout the universe should fail Him, then all is lost. If God did not "care for" His children, it would be the same as not caring for Himself, since all His aims and purposes culminate in His family. God has crowned man with glory and honor, by putting all things under his feet.

The world is as ignorant of man as it is of God; and the prevailing idea of either is a caricature.

It is doubtful whether a self-conscious moral will could be awakened outside of a body, or inside of one if it were less highly organized than the human body. The higher animals share our sensations of pain and pleasure, but it is extremely doubtful whether any of them share in

our self-conscious, moral purposes. Possibly a soul *must* appear in any such highly organized form of God's energies as a human body, and *cannot* appear where the organization of His energies falls short of this high standard. If we believe the body to be the integration of God's own energies it would not be strange if the body proved to be the incipient soul. We have not yet sounded the depths of God's creative wisdom either in the soul or the body; we only know that soul and body are bound together, and that God's highest achievement and deepest interest center in them. How infinitely precious in the sight of God are His children, the crown and glory of all His wisdom, love, and power!

5. Is not socialism the best religion there is?

When socialism means the Kingdom of God, it is the best religion conceivable. And it is a pity that either religion or socialism should ever mean anything less than the Kingdom of God; for when they drop below that standard, the one is spurious religion while the other is counterfeit socialism; the former discarding society, and the latter eliminating God, both alike become a menace.

Last summer in Madison Square, New York, I listened to a socialist who was ridiculing the very idea of God. Exhorting his listeners to have a little sense, he advised them to get rid of God, priests, ministers, churches, and King Capital. He said:

"You have but one life to live, and it is short; if ever you get anything, you must get it now."

This type of socialism is a scourge, a pest, a bubonic plague. Nevertheless we would not minimize the crime of withholding from men their rights in this life.

Another socialist speaking at a park in my own city said:

"In the past, the capitalist has taken it all, leaving the working man only enough for the food necessary to do his work,— and not always that. But we do not blame him, he had a right to take it because he could; — we should have done the same if we had been in his place. That is what life means; 'the race is to the swift, and the battle to the strong.' Only the fittest have a right to live. But our turn is soon coming when we shall be able to take it all,— and we will."

Now, whoever teaches a theory like that, or acts upon it, is a cancer in the social body. It makes no difference whether or not he is a church member, whether business man, or laborer; such a man is a malignant growth in the body of humanity.

It is just because socialism means anything from the religion of Jesus to this putrid stuff, that the average well-meaning person is cautious about identifying himself with any movement bearing the name of socialism. Yet any religion that stands aloof from social well-being is doomed,— as it ought to be. No man can love God while hating his brother; and whether he loves his brother is proved more by his actions than by his words. To

love our brother, as we shall see, is enlightened selfishness as well as altruism.

"God in the soul" has been rather a popular definition of religion. To many minds this definition conveys a rich and ample meaning. To others it conveys gross error, for religious hysteria is often thought to be God in the soul. A mere psychic state, a religious opiate, a mental disease, may be so interpreted. It is a question whether any definition of religion is safe. A description of religion is far preferable to a definition, and has the advantage of being an easier task. When we identify religion with the Kingdom of God, we have a perfectly clear idea. *The Kingdom of God is a loving, intelligent family organized around the Father's good-will, living in the universe as His home, using the forces of nature as the instruments of His will, and making all things vocal with His wisdom, love, and power.*

This is true religion; this is a desirable socialism; this is right life. For such an end God, man, and the enveloping powers of nature exist. Any loss of this vision, any lack of warmth or enthusiasm for its realization, spells degeneration. Such a state of mind means the perversion of nature, the engendering of rebellion in the Kingdom of God, and the making of prodigals. Religious experience does not mean just any kind of comfortable, private feeling, but a conscious love for the family of God, and conscious interest in the work that God and His children are trying to accomplish *in the midst of nature's forces.* Religious experience means an active de-

sire to brighten the great world home, and to gladden the great world family. The idea is so simple that a child can understand it; and a child's heart may glow with happiness while helping to brighten the world. To take one's place in the family of God as a member, loving, and beloved, is something infinitely better than cold ethics. Character that does not root itself in friendship is poor character; it bears not the fruit of righteousness, love, and joy. Our debt of friendship to all men is no less binding than our financial obligations. Friendship is the great power for good in the world. "I have called you friends, and such you are." And because they were friends, Jesus revealed to His disciples all the secrets of His soul, and threw over them the spell of His life. By interweaving their lives in some great purpose, or by promoting a common enterprise, friends lift each other into the finest vision. Simple, hearty, and unfeigned friendship for God and men, is religion pure and undefiled. A wise man does not defer friendship until he is perfect, but seeks friendship first to learn what perfection is, that through friendship he may receive strength to be perfect.

The new truths clearly manifest concerning God, man, and nature cause a new heaven to dawn, and a new hell to yawn. Heaven is brighter, and hell is hotter, than we had been thinking. The relation that exists between God, man, and the universe makes it perfectly plain that God does not go ahead of His children to make either heaven or hell. There *is* no heaven on either side the grave, ex-

cept that which is made by the coöperation of God and His children. Though there are plenty of heavenly sites in the universe, yet the building of a Holy City is never begun until some of God's children have arrived on the scene. They who organize around the good will of God build a heaven in time and place; out of God's energies in which they live, they make a beautiful home. Heaven is doubtless a place as well as a state, for souls that are in a right state will make a right place in which to live. More than likely there are many heavens in the universe. In my city heaven may be on one floor and hell on another, while the character of the third floor is uncertain. Souls cannot live outside of God's enfolding energies, and therefore they cannot avoid making either heaven or hell out of His infinite powers. Citizens of the Kingdom, under the guiding wisdom of God, make heaven. Those who refuse citizenship, preferring their own way, make hell; but they make it out of the same mighty forces of which heaven is made.

The idea that God, independent of His children, made a pretty place called heaven, and an ugly place called hell, in order that He might put good little people in the one, and push naughty little people off into the other, is the idea of a fool's heaven and a fool's hell; — the facts are much more glorious and awful. There will be just as good a heaven as the Kingdom of God builds, and no better. Likewise there will be just as bad a hell as God's disloyal sons make, and no worse. No dream can pic-

ture the paradise that God may make in this universe with the help of His good children. And the hell that His rebellious sons may create is something appalling. Since heaven or hell is simply the shape we give to God's enfolding energies, all of us are unavoidably engaged in constructing the one or the other, and we have been so engaged every moment since our conscious life began. No one dare think that all his work is heaven-building. Altogether, through vice or greed, we have managed to produce of late the hottest Gehenna ever witnessed on earth. It has taken longer to make this sad condition than most of us realize; and many who little suspect their responsibility and guilt have been active agents in creating the fires of war and other fires in which there has been of late so much writhing and gnashing of teeth. And at the moment of the world's greatest anguish, there were those who were trying to get rich out of the state of sorrow into which they had helped to plunge humanity. I refer to all profiteers and crooked dealers, whether they were laborers or capitalists; to those who were willing that additional hundreds of thousands of our boys should go down into the lake of fire, if only they could fill their coffers. These were the devils who stood round the boiling caldron with their flesh hooks, to tear the flesh of innocent boys if they rose to the surface of the boiling liquid. Some of these flesh-hook devils, having refined manners, posed as gentlemen. Others were lewd fellows of various sorts. But the flames which they fed were not

hot enough for them. They were getting ready for a fire that will burn much deeper, and they will be sure to find it.

During the war, many found their faith in God staggering before a perdition created by human beings. But their faith should not have been unsettled, because this war was as sure to follow the way the world was living as the wheels of the cart are certain to follow the tread of the ox. Some had the blindness and audacity to blame God for what we have done. God gave us the raw material with which to build a heaven, and we constructed a hell. Through His many prophets and seers God told us what we were doing, but we would not believe Him. Thinking ourselves wise we became fools, and turned His good gifts into instruments of torture. The majority of the people, believing that they could get along without giving much heed to God, took His limitless gifts and made a grand holiday instead of a Holy Day, and then rode in automobiles and yachts to their doom. When a world is bad enough to make war, it needs war. Though I had three sons between my heart and Germany's steel, yet I realized that America had to be hurt for her own salvation, for the salvation of Germany, for the safety of the world, and for the utter destruction of the German intriguers. If the people of the allied nations, however, had been shaping the instruments of their spirits into clean bodies, happy homes, honest business, and good governments, and all of these into the Kingdom of God on earth, Prussia could not have dreamed her dream of

world dominance, nor would she have dared to throw down the gauntlet before the world. But seeing our weakness, she scorned our threats. Being under tutorship to the god of power, in spite of her vices, which were equal to those of other nations, Prussia became shrewder and stronger than the nations that were too largely feasting under a bacchanalian god, or softly enjoying themselves under a Santa Claus deity, or were piling up unrighteous gains under no god, or under one that was capable of wicked favoritism. It was clear to the prophets of the Most High that something was due,— and it came. Bad as war is, that state of society which makes war possible is even worse. When society grows its body into a monster, the corrective influence of hell, in some form, is the last hope. This does not, however, exonerate Germany from the crime of launching a ruthless war to gratify her lust for world domination. God surely could not help it, since the human family shaped its body as it did against light and conscience; but if there were no retribution for sin and ignorance He would lose His family utterly. Hell inevitably came when the tools were forged and the devils were trained; but God neither forged the tools nor trained the devils.

I am advocating no moral prudery, nor religious bigotry. Neither do I wish to imply that heaven has not been built up side by side with hell during the last fifty years,— for it has. Those who have profited intellectually and spiritually by the revelations of modern learning, and by the new influx of power, and by the new social

opportunities, have made the last fifty years the grandest in human history. Of these noble sons and daughters it should be said: their growth in the knowledge of God, their success in the discovery of man, their achievements in wresting from nature its deepest secrets, their grasp on the meaning of God's Kingdom, their accomplishments in the practical launching of everything pertaining to a new era and a finer world order have made this the golden age for all who have seen the vision and shared in the work. Yet over against this kingdom of light and love, there has grown up a kingdom of darkness and hate. These two kingdoms have grown up side by side in every civilized country. And finally the kingdom of darkness embroiled all the nations in a deadly conflict. Seeing all, and feeling all, God was the greatest sufferer in the awful carnage of the contending armies. "In Him we live, and move, and have our being;" and therefore armies live, and fight their battles in God. They fight their battles with God's own powers, and make gaping wounds in His own body. And yet, some will ask, "Where was God?" Not only was He in the thick of the fight, but the thick of the fight was in His beautiful, enfolding energies. We shall make heaven out of the selfsame energies when we are done making hell out of them. And then, as now, God will be in our midst; but He will be in our midst as a joyous, and not a suffering God.

It would have been a pity if this war had ended before the nations opened their eyes to the higher purposes of God for future civilization, or before their consciences

had been cleansed for the work of advancing the Kingdom. God will come to our help with mighty power when we come to His help with mighty obedience. General Sherman said, "War is hell." This has generally been taken to mean that war is as terrible as hell; but it is more than that, it is hell literally, *because hell is never anything but war.* If there were no war of any kind there would be no hell. This is equally true either side the grave. If there were no individuals in the universe to oppose God's will and so misuse His enfolding energies as to harm one another, hell would cease to be. The beginning of hell is very pleasurable, and that is why men begin it. But it always grows more and more terrible until it becomes a lake of fire. It is worse than brimstone, because men have found hotter materials to use. It is curtains of fire, poisonous gases, shrapnel, bombs, machine guns, and mud mixed with blood.

War begins in selfish desire, and continues in the misuse of God's good gifts. Intensified desire diverts to its own use that which does not belong to it; and becoming powerful, arrogant, and oppressive, it brews hell without knowing it. Thinking that it knows all, it refuses instruction. To the perverted mind, imprisoned in a distorted body, Jesus looks weak, while God seems a myth, or mere brute force. Finally hell breaks loose in all its fury.

The most pathetic thing in this whole affair is that the good have to go to hell with the bad,— at least in this life. But it was ever so. Jesus truly "descended into

hell," only it was before He died. The same is true of God and all His good sons. There is no other way to save the situation. Gehenna, as well as heaven, begins *here* and *now*. It may be that the rebellious sons of God have created a worse hell on the other side of the grave, but if they have, it is exactly the same in kind as that which they have made here. Every immoral and painful condition in the universe is wrought in God. God was as closely related to the recent war as a man is related to the abscess on his finger; and He is so related to all hells, in all worlds. For hell is never anything but a painful disturbance wrought in God's body by the sons whom He has enfolded in His bosom. And since there are so many discordant and vicious elements throughout all the world, it is to be hoped that the nations are being purged by the awful fires through which they are passing.

Has the earth had its last war? That is not at all likely. There is plenty of discord in society even now that the main war is over. Many wrongs must be righted and many problems solved or terror will break out somewhere. Human society and human institutions have grown about as large and complex as is possible, unless they can be dominated by a larger ideal and a more Christlike spirit. While I sympathize with all the hopes and aspirations of the noble men and women of our day for a more peaceful earth, yet I do so only on the condition that men will learn to know and obey the truth.

Nothing should be left undone that will hasten the day of righteousness and peace.

God has two hands with which He is trying to save the world. The one is a crucified hand, and the other is a great steel hand. The crucified hand, which is the pledge of forgiveness and good will, is both logically and chronologically first. For nearly two thousand years God has been extending this hand. Millions have accepted it and lived; but many more have refused it, preferring the strife of the world. It is perfectly plain that society will not be saved by this means alone. Without minimizing the worth of the crucified hand, or withdrawing it, God is at last employing a hand of steel, as vast as the machinery of the world, and identical with it. God is placing His great steel fingers around men and drawing them together. No longer may men live apart, for under this new pressure nothing has value in isolation. Capital has no value without labor, neither has labor any value without capital; and these may no longer work successfully together without uplifting the weak nations of the earth. The masses and classes can no longer escape each other. Bound together by bands of steel, they may do one of two things — kill each other or love one another. There is no third alternative. I have faith that when men see themselves in the grip of the steel hand, they will choose the better alternative and, by clasping God's crucified hand, become brothers. As things have been going, scores of peoples on our little earth have

lived in darkness and under the hand of awful oppression; they could have suffered and rotted for millenniums without the prosperous nations knowing or caring. At last, however, we know, and our own salvation now clearly rests on our caring. The articulate body of humanity has become as great as the nations of the earth, and that body is made up of the infinite energies of God. We now have the privilege of making this mighty body express more fully than ever before the thought and love of God, or else we shall be compelled to shape it into the most gigantic monster that ever stalked forth to do the foul deeds of hell. Were there a legion of leering and jeering devils, plotting evil against our earth, the comprehending mind could hear them say, "We wish for no more awful instruments of torture than these energies of the Infinite with which His children clothe themselves. Only let us lead them to fall out by the way, and they will damn each other by smiting with the infinite powers of their God." Men,— individuals and nations! — do we see it, do we know the simple rudiments of life, is it not clearly manifest that we must strive for the Christ life or socially commit suicide and murder?

Men have made such great mental and material growth that unlimited power is placed at their disposal. That fact makes this the greatest day in human history. I have already said that the man soul is in quest of omnipresence by progressively making the universe the instrument of his will. The hour has struck for his supreme effort in that direction; though simply creeping in the

past, he may now run if only he will obey the divine law. However, if he will not obey, the hour for disintegration has arrived; and once more nations and empires must burn to the ground, and upon the ashes of the conflagration, the noble "remnant" must again begin to rebuild slowly and painfully the temple of God on earth.

If our old men are dreaming dreams, and our young men are seeing visions, let them come forth in this crisis. But thank God, they are coming! Millions are coming! We believe there will be enough to save the day. And what a day it will be if, after all this dreadful upheaval, we can reconstruct the world on such broad principles of righteousness and love that the race shall start upon a new era of peace and good will! We must not on account of ignorance or selfishness throw away this golden opportunity.

Get ye up upon the mountains, O Israel, O Church of God, and look for the day!

CHAPTER IV

DOES GOD HAVE A BODY, AND COULD HE BECOME A MAN?

Was Jesus God or a good man only?
Can modern psychology any longer believe in the Deity of Jesus?
Where does Jesus belong in the religious, social, and thought world?

1. Introductory statement

Thus far our discussion of God has been largely in relation to physics. At last, however, we are ready to consider Him on a higher plane.

Our knowledge of both God and man is incomplete until we see their oneness in Jesus and in the kingdom which Jesus proclaimed. In the life of Jesus, God and man are viewed from a higher spiritual level. The world lies broken into fragments until these fragments become united in the Christ type of life. Then the body, the human mind, God, and the whole material universe coordinate to make one beautiful whole.

Starting with the Scriptural idea that all things proceed from Wisdom, or God, then strictly speaking, God is the only person in the universe who has a body of His

own. All other spirits live in His bodies. This is necessarily so if all the way from its simplest elements to its most highly organized forms, nature is but the expression of the divine Will. As we have already shown, the human body is but a part of universal nature,— the finest part, the blossom. Therefore, what we call the human organism is primarily God's. Not only is it the very finest bit of His *workmanship,* but it is His to *use,* unless His child, the man soul, robs Him of His own. In these highly specialized parts of nature God has not merely one, but billions of bodies,— all the bodies there are. The Infinite Mind would find one such body utterly inadequate. With but one bodily form He would be incomparably worse off than an organist with but one finger. If God could come to articulate speech and deed through but one physical instrument, He and all His family might well despair. If as the Scriptures teach, however, each and every physical body is His very own, in which and through which He may live, then every condition is provided for a God humanly personal and infinitely satisfying. He may be as local and personal as our parents or neighbors. Though greater than all, He is yet in all and through all,

> "Center and soul of every sphere,
> Yet to each loving heart how near!"

Not only is God lovingly present to every Christian heart, but at the same time He is personally revealed by every human form through which He is permitted to live

and love and serve. The pity of it all is that we so often prevent God from using His own body, in which we too live, by causing it to express in word and deed that which is contrary to His thought and love.

Before we take up the subject of the Incarnation, it may be well to consider what is meant by the trinity.

2. The idea of the trinity and how it came about

When we say that God is a trinity we do not mean that there are three Gods. There is just one God who, as we have repeatedly said, is a Loving Intelligent Will.

The idea of the trinity came about in this way:

The early Christians were so deeply impressed by Jesus, and so warmly attached to their Master, that they instinctively adored and worshiped Him; for, somehow, He brought God to them even as He brought them to God. Yet the Christians, like the Jews, strenuously opposed the worship of more than one Divinity. Their stout opposition to Polytheism provoked the retort from their heathen neighbors that Christians should not be so particular about the number of Gods, because they worshiped at least two, a Father God and a Son God,— and three, if they added a Holy Spirit God. So it is not strange that the Christians, to justify their own conduct, were driven to a profound study of Deity. And though they made some grave mistakes, nevertheless they discovered some vital truths concerning the nature of personality which greatly enlarged and enriched their conception of God. It must be re-

membered that in the early Christian centuries many thought of God as something very remote and placid, like a sea of bliss; being infinitely happy and self-contained, He was at perfect rest. Such a One would not contaminate Himself by being identified with nature or man. To the Christian Gnostics and Jews, the idea that God became incarnate and suffered death on the cross was repugnant. Some believed that it was beneath God even to create a world like ours. They, therefore, attributed creation to lesser divinities. However, in the third century Origen stoutly maintained that God must have created the world. Yet so eminent a man as Origen believed that He created it for "tainted souls."

After much study, the Church Fathers arrived at the conclusion that God was somehow Three in One, a sort of society within Himself,— and they were right. For without something like a social experience in one's self, it is impossible to be a person at all. This is equally true of God or man. To be a person one must know himself, and this he could not do if he were not able to keep company with himself. The pen with which I am writing is not a person because it has no capacity for self-communion. But because I hold *fellowship* with myself I am a person. Since every human being keeps company with himself more than he does with all other persons put together, may God have mercy on him if he is bad company, if he is not safe to be left alone with himself. A tree may stand alone in infinite solitude, companionless; but for better, for worse, a man must forever remain in

his own company, hearing praise or condemnation from his own heart. How is this possible, unless there is something in a man's individual experience that resembles society? In self-knowledge, as in all knowledge, there are the *knower* and the *known*. When we commune with ourselves we are, at the same moment, the subject and the object of our own experience. The self that sees may fittingly be called the father of our personality, and with equal propriety the self that we see may be called the begotten of our personality. Thus something resembling father and son is experienced in our first step toward self-knowledge. Whether the capacity to be our own subject and object amounts to much or little, it was this that the Fathers saw and rightly attributed to God.

Furthermore, there is yet another step to be taken in the act of coming to true self-knowledge. By what power does one determine that the person with whom he communes is himself? There is something in our experience resembling a third person, one who recognizes both subject and object and bears witness that they are one. The reader may say, "I can see the first and the second, but I cannot see the third." The self that sees the first and the second is the third. This power by which we complete the unity of our being is by no means trivial, as some may think. There are abnormal personalities who successfully achieve the subjective and objective in their experience and keep up an abnormal communion with themselves from morning till night, who cannot witness true. So they insist that they are

"General Jacksons" or "Jesus Christs" or great "railroad magnates." Their personalities have broken down, not because they lack self-consciousness, but because they lack the power of coming to unity. A perfectly sane person, therefore, is subject, object, and witnesser all in one. If God were not this kind of trinity He would not be a person at all.

To grasp so clearly the significance of personality was a great spiritual achievement. The Church Fathers did more than they realized; they described the elements inherent in all personalities. They saved God to the intellect and to the affections by bringing Him out of remote obscurity into the blazing light of moral and spiritual personality. God is personal because He is triune; that is, because He is complex enough to keep company with Himself and to know Himself. If the reader asks "What does all this amount to for us?" my answer is, "It amounts to the difference between a personal God and the deity who is an 'immobile placid sea of bliss.' In the second place it shows the difference between the God who is a Loving Intelligent Will and the materialist's god who is no more than a blind Samson. It also discloses the essential likeness between all personalities, however much they may differ in development."

If I were asked to put my finger on the greatest weakness in present-day thought I should unhesitatingly point out the subject of personality. Men are falling down like ten-pins before the intellectual difficulties of believing in a personal God; and many of them are even doubting the

spiritual personality of man. And this is largely due to the fact that they are unable to form any mental picture of personality. One of the beautiful surprises for this generation is that the Fathers in working out the personality of God found the only conception of personality that is true to universal experience. They did not realize that they were analyzing the human spirit as well as God, because their thought was wholly on Him. But they saw God through their own personalities, and if they had not borne God's image they never could have analyzed the personality of God. In this generation we turn their analysis of God upon ourselves and find that it tallies perfectly with our experience. We at last see that the triune, or personal, man soul is the child of the triune, or personal, God Soul; and thus a deeper bond is established between the Father and His child.

The use to which the Church Fathers put this analysis of God's personality was both fortunate and unfortunate. It was fortunate because it enabled them to continue their belief in the deity of Jesus and, at the same time, their belief in the oneness of God. They were still able to oppose polytheism, and yet come to Jesus as the fountain of divine blessing. They worshiped God in the face of Jesus. In other words, they believed in a genuine Incarnation. This was fortunate beyond all calculation. Just how fortunate it was we shall have to illustrate to the best of our ability when we come to the subject of Incarnation. Thus far I have not discussed the Incarnation, neither have I had Jesus in mind while consider-

ing the trinity. For in whatever sense God is a trinity, He was such before Jesus was born.

Before discussing the divinity of Jesus we must briefly call attention to the unfortunate use which the Fathers made of their analysis of the personality of God. They thought they had solved the question of Christ's divinity when they took this objective element in the experience of God and clothed it with flesh. Though they denied that these distinctions in God were properly named by the word person, yet they admitted their inability to think of a better term. Then they so wrenched God's personality apart as to send His objective self, which was simply an element in His experience of self-consciousness, into the world to be the Messiah. And though they stoutly maintained that these three elements in God were indivisible, yet God's subjective self could stay far away in heaven while His objective self could go to earth as a man. At the same time each of the three elements in God's experience of selfhood could perform all the functions of a full personality. This was doing the worst possible violence to the personality of God; and it has wrought confusion from that day to this. As we have already seen, it takes these three elements in God's experience to make Him any person at all. The common use made of the subjective, objective, and witnessing elements in the personality of God is pure Tri-Theism, regardless of how they are united. God does not have three personalities that can be scattered about in the universe.

The idea that God's objective experience can go off on a journey, or that it can return to heaven while His witnessing experience in turn goes to earth, leaving the subjective and objective in heaven, is religious illiteracy. Neither God nor any part of God ever goes or comes. The triune, or personal God, is never far enough off to come anywhere. There is no place in the universe where for a moment He is not. He is always the Father, and Creator, and Intelligent Will in whom all creation lives, and moves, and has its being. The *second element* in God's own act of consciousness did not become incarnate in Jesus; the conscious God Himself entered the life of man.

The baptismal formula, "In the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit," has no reference to the triple element in God's self-consciousness. It beautifully represents the three ways that we are to look at God, if we are to see Him in the fulness of His glory. First, we think of God as He is in Himself, and as He must be to His own infinite thought. Second, we think of Him as He has expressed Himself in nature, in humanity and, best of all, as He has revealed Himself in His obedient Son Jesus. Third, we think of God as the still small voice within, the Soul of our souls, the One to whom we speak when we have shut the door; the one to whom we whisper our deepest secrets, and ask Him if He loves and forgives us. Beyond the fact that the trinity constitutes God a person, it has nothing to do with the deity of Jesus. How God became incarnate

is another question; a question to which we now gladly address ourselves.

3. Was Jesus God or a good man only?

At a meeting of city ministers, addressed by one of their own number, the speaker took from Jesus the last shred of divinity. According to this minister, Jesus was a prophet sent from God, and the best of men, but nothing more. A progressive Jewish rabbi asked if this were not the present attitude of all intelligent ministers, and whether they did not, for the sake of expediency, leave the pew in ignorance of their real belief. In the opinion of the rabbi, Jesus was one of the greatest of Jewish reformers, but not the founder of Christian religion. His contention was that Paul founded the Christian Church on a peculiar, psychic experience which came to him on his way to Damascus.

"The Divinity of Jesus" was then assigned to me as a topic for the next meeting. Naturally, I turned to the Scriptures to see what they had to say concerning the relation of God to man. Though expecting to find on this subject a marked degree of difference between the Old and New Testaments, yet I was wholly unprepared for the facts as they appeared. Before presenting my findings, I asked the rabbi to consider whether Jesus was a "Jewish reformer," or a Jewish fulfiller,— it being my conviction that He was the latter. I then stated that, having examined the Old Testament on the relation exist-

ing between God and man, I failed to find a single passage recognizing God within the human life; and that no greater surprise than this had come to me in my recent study of the Scriptures. In the Old Testament, the nearest approach to the immanence of God in the soul was the following:

"I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh," and "Is not my dwelling with the humble in heart?" But even here the divine Spirit was only *upon* them or *with* them. Never, so far as I could discover, did He dwell *in* them. In some twenty-four hundred verses, God was represented as sustaining many beautiful and terrible relations to men. This relationship was symbolized by birds, beasts, and natural elements, to the very limit of the imagination. After the most solemn warnings and attractive promises, God would depart from His people for a season and then return with rewards and punishments according to their faithfulness. He scrutinized their inmost thoughts; in fact, He did everything except enter their lives.

On turning to the New Testament, however, I found a startling contrast. God dwelt not only in the hearts but in the bodies of men. "For know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? Yea, ye are the temple of the living God." "Know ye not that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit?" "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, show us the

Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" "The Father abiding in me doeth His works." "In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father and ye in me, and I in you." "If a man love me he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

As a prospector seeks for gold, I sought in the Old Testament for God in the life of man and did not find Him; but no sooner had I reached the New Testament than all was changed. Here was a new country. The prospector was in the midst of that for which he sought. No mountain was ever as rich in gold as the human heart, according to the New Testament, was rich with the indwelling God.

The religion of Jesus in contrast with that of the prophets is like a tree, which Luther Burbank has transformed into a new variety bearing strange and luscious fruit. I wondered that I had overlooked for so long a time the complete cleavage between the two parts of our Bible on this subject. Jesus was truly a Jewish reformer, but to a much greater degree He was a Jewish fulfiller. In revealing God's true oneness with man He completed the prophet's imperfect religious vision, and best of all, made the vision a fact in His own experience. At the same time He began making it a reality in the experience of His disciples.

I told the friend who in a previous meeting had stripped Jesus of all His divinity, that he had very suc-

cessfully demolished some antiquated psychology, but strange to say had completely overlooked the new psychology which, in my opinion, fully restored Christ's divinity. As to his statement that "Jesus was a good man only," I reminded him that there is no such being. For, each one of us, in so far as he is "only," is a bad man. It requires the oneness of God and man to make a *good* man. When a human soul is separated from God, he ceases to be a complete person. God and the true self always come or go together; in order to be a human soul, in any worthy sense, one must be both God and man in one. A man severed from God is but the fragment of a man, a limb broken from the tree, a lifeless branch. To touch the living branch of a tree is to touch the tree. The fruit of the branch is likewise the fruit of the tree. That any person can be a "good man only," is an idea contrary to the New Testament and modern psychology.

4. Can modern psychology any longer believe in the Deity of Jesus?

The Scriptures certainly do not teach that Jesus was God only; neither do they teach that He was man only. It is my own deepest conviction that Jesus was very God and very man. Furthermore, I believe this to be the teaching of the Scriptures, and the idea that best conforms to modern psychology. To come to Jesus is to come to God; likewise to come to God is to come to

Jesus. He is at once God in man, and man in God. I believe in the God of Jesus, and I believe in the Jesus of God. How modern psychology can avoid believing in both the deity and humanity of Jesus, I do not see. Some who believe in Christ's divinity do not believe in His deity. They say, "Yes, He is divine, He is incomparable, He is altogether lovely; but He is not Deity, because Deity is God Himself." But my thesis is that Jesus was "very God and very man."

To picture this truth to our minds will be our next task. An old-time friend, while reporting to me the installation of a minister whom I knew, said:

"Would you believe it! Mr. G. told the council that he not only believed in the divinity, but that he believed in the Deity of Jesus." Here my friend threw his head back and laughed heartily, expecting me to laugh with him. When he had finished laughing, I told him that I also believed in the deity as well as in the humanity of Jesus; and that if I did not believe in His deity I did not think I should believe in any religion at all. This proved to be quite a surprise to my friend. So to his puzzled look of inquiry I replied:

"And I could make you believe it." As his curiosity deepened at this remark, I asked him,

"Do you know where I first met God — not an emanation from Him, but God; the Will that formed the worlds,— all the God there is?" "No," was his reply. "Fortunately," I answered, "I do. It was in my mother. When I was a little boy the great God at times

enfolded me in human arms, and looked into my face through benignant, human eyes, and spoke tender words with a sweet accent. My silent and invisible mother was often so closely identified with God that they would be thinking and feeling the same thing concerning me. At such times the human form expressed their common thought and love; my heavenly Father, no less than my invisible mother, enfolded me with His arms. If in these supreme moments God was not in my mother, then it is useless to look for Him anywhere in the Universe. My mother was different from the non-Christian mothers in our rough frontier. Many times she so loved me *in* God, and *with* God, that she became a channel through which God Himself had personal access to me through all the human modes of approach."

I then told my friend of an experience with my mother at church in the little frontier schoolhouse. I was lying on the seat with my head in her lap, tickling my nose with her boa. When the time came for prayers, my mother bowed her head to the desk in front of her. While her lips moved in prayer, I observed that her dear face was troubled. As she was unconscious of my gaze, I continued to look into her sorrowful face. Though but a little child, I fully understood what she was doing, and was able to mark the stages of her progress. My invisible mother was talking with our invisible Father, and the face gradually changed until finally I could tell that her will had merged completely with His will; and then her face, which was primarily His face, became

radiant with spiritual beauty. I had seen the dear human face of God, and at the same time it was the face of my mother.

I called my friend's attention to the fact that once upon a time the invisible God said to the invisible Clara Barton:

"Clara, let us go out onto the battle-field where the poor soldier boys languish and die;" and Clara responded to His thought and love. Then the invisible God and the invisible Clara Barton went to the battle-field in God's body, because Clara had no body exclusively her own. So, when that form bending over the soldier boy wiped away the dust and blood and pain, while whispering of home, of mother, and of God, it was the Father, as much as it was Clara Barton, who was performing the deed; and He, not less than she, was visibly and humanly present. The ministering hand was as truly His instrument as it was hers; while the stronger will and deeper love were the Father's. Before Clara Barton thought of it, the Father, knowing all and feeling all, suggested to her the kindly deed; nor did He stop loving the soldier boy when she began.

Again addressing my friend, I said:

"It is impossible for me to understand you. You have always believed God to be immanent in all nature; you have seen Him in sticks and stones and stars; but you now fail to recognize Him in His highest, His only instrument through which He is capable of coming to articulate speech and deed. How I pity your poor help-

less God who is buried fathoms and fathoms out of sight. He can neither see, nor hear, nor breathe; nor can He walk or talk. But you see, *my* God can get clear to the surface in audible word, and visible deed. When my God finds a good, clean Frenchman, He begins talking and writing French. If you doubt this, either you are not familiar with French literature, or else you do not know God. Under similar conditions God speaks all the languages. How beautifully and abundantly He has spoken through the German and English tongues! While in Greek and Hebrew, God has uttered mighty words of wisdom, and has filled the earth with His glorious pæans. Human wisdom alone could never have spoken thus. If we but have eyes to see and hearts to feel we shall realize that all about us God is getting to the surface through devoted Christians. When the true preacher lifts the souls before him into the will of God, he sees a divine expression upon their faces; and if he is spiritually wise, he will realize that for the time being these are the dear human instruments of God, as truly as they are the faces of human spirits; and when he has poured out his soul in behalf of some great cause of God for which he would be willing to die, he will find someone with outstretched hand ready to meet him and willing to coöperate, if need be, even unto death, and then it is his privilege to know that, while shaking hands with a brother spirit, he was at the same time shaking hands with the infinite God. In these rare experiences of ours, the invisible God no less than the invisible man has

come to outward expression, and this He would always do, if our wills were not contrary to His will. Our feeble and infrequent inspiration is but intermittent incarnation, while full incarnation is permanent inspiration.

"Why," I asked, "should you hesitate to think of Jesus as God and man? If the Father-Spirit and the child-spirit were thinking and willing the same thing, which one came to expression through the words and acts of the body? If A and B were lifting an object, would it be truthful to say that A was lifting it? The visible form that lived and taught by the shores of Galilee was as truly God as it was man, unless the child-spirit did not know and do the Father-Spirit's will. Sometimes a whole congregation of wills express themselves joyfully and forcefully through one written resolution. God never speaks an audible word, except through one of His bodies in which He has enfolded a child-spirit. When, however, the child-spirit rebels against the Father, and causes the instrument to speak or act vile things, the Father is dumb. His child has robbed Him of His body. We have grown so accustomed to this form of robbery that we naturally think of human spirits as having bodies all their own, while we conceive of God as a vague, disembodied influence. We speak of God as sending men, forgetting that He never sends a man anywhere without sending him in His own body and accompanying him with His own spiritual Presence. And that which the messenger says is not worth hearing if it fails to express

the Father's thought and will. The God who, through beautiful chemical energies, makes the ear, hears; and the God who makes the eye, sees; and He who makes the lips, speaks. Either God knows the thrill of nerves, or else He has an infinite amount to learn. Why then should we say that Jesus was only a good man, when the body was God's very own, and the guiding will was that of the Father? A man is all God except the invisible human spirit; and in the case of Jesus, even the human spirit rendered such filial obedience that the Father, for once in human history, got to the surface through His own instrument in a steady flow of luminous words and loving deeds. If the composite life of Jesus were named after its major elements, then Jesus should be called God. However, as that would be both confusing and false, we state the truth as it is, and say that Jesus was both God and man, that is, a God-filled man, or a God-man."

"Oh well," said my friend, "if you mean it that way!"

"Did I not tell you," I replied, "that you would believe it? The trouble with you is that you forget it. You should be proclaiming it from the housetop that God has got clear to the surface in human form, and that men have clasped His hand, and heard His voice, and seen His face."

In the life of Jesus, religion reached a new and distinct stage of development. It was in Him that the essential *oneness* of Deity and humanity first became clearly manifest. To the friends of Jesus, God was no longer a

disembodied spirit. The Christian's God is clearly the God of Israel, but He is the God of Israel become human and visible. The world has been slow to grasp the meaning of Christ's life and teachings. To maintain the uniqueness of Jesus, it has denied the universality of the truth which He proclaimed: namely, the organic and moral oneness of God and man. If the union of God and man as realized in Jesus was so beautiful, a similar union between God and all men would be equally beautiful. That God desires such a union with all His children there can be no doubt; and that He is inspiring His disciples with the glorious hope of its accomplishment is equally certain. Yet for the present, even the most devoted followers have not nearly attained unto the fulness of the stature of Jesus; but some glad day they shall be wholly like Him whose image they already unmistakably bear. This is the Christian's noblest hope.

If God has ever united His personality with that of even one man, then there is a way of doing it. And if there is a way, what finer goal is possible, than that such a union between God and every man be consummated? Really, that is what the Christian Religion is about. Not only may God and every man be similarly united, but the sin of man alone can prevent such a union from taking place. If there were no sin or rebellion in a man's heart, he would instantly become a God-man on the plane of his present human development; and as he "Advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men," he would be a God-man on a higher level. If the human

side of the Christ has continued thus to grow for more than nineteen hundred years, on what altitudes of knowledge He is a God-man by this time, we can but faintly surmise. And with the possibility of a complete purging from sin, and the possibility of an infinite growth in wisdom, we, too, may yet be God-men on what would now seem to us dizzying heights; we shall ever be attaining "Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." No matter what one's conception of the trinity in God's personality may be, God is capable of uniting with every man in the same way that He united with the man Jesus. If we prefer to believe that God had an Eternal Son who came to clothe himself in a man, the problem of union would in nowise be changed. A Son-God, if He existed either in the Father or out of the Father, could not be less than a person, and the manner of uniting Himself with a man would be the same. My interest in the metaphysics of the trinity is that it gives us a firm grasp on the personality of God and the personality of man. I rest on the fact that the Personal God became incarnate and still seeks the souls of men for his dwelling-place. I further believe that when we do not read a later metaphysics into the Bible, the Scriptures wholly support the more modern conception. In the beginning was the Logos, Word, or Wisdom. Wisdom was with God from the beginning; that is, God was always Wisdom, and not a material thing. All things were made by Wisdom, or God. Life was in God, and God's life was the light of men; and though it was shin-

ing into the darkness the darkness apprehended it not. The God who is wisdom, and not matter, was in the world, and the world was made by Him, but it knew Him not. Finally Wisdom, or God, became flesh, and tabernacled among us, and we discerned His glory, a glory as of an only-begotten with a father, full of grace and truth. The author seems to me to believe that the Personal God became incarnate, and that the one in whom He dwelt, in contrast with other men, looked like an only son of a father.

Notwithstanding this glorious possibility, there is always a tendency for religion to revert to a lower type; and this tendency is particularly noticeable just now. Not being able to believe in the divinity of Jesus according to the old metaphysics, multitudes are ceasing to believe in Him as Emmanuel,— or "God with us." At a time like this, when a forward movement is the only hope of saving our great material structure from becoming another Tower of Babel, a retrograde movement is lamentable. What we especially need is a new interpretation of Jesus, followed by a finer devotion to Him, and a whole-hearted commitment of ourselves to His ever-widening program. God is becoming altogether too hazy and inarticulate, at a time when the consciousness of His holy Presence is especially needed, if we are to shape and sustain a civilization that is quadrupling itself in weight and extent by reason of the growth and application of material knowledge. Any quickening of God that is to be highly beneficial must

result in His further advent into human lives and human institutions after the pattern of Jesus.

That a mere God of nature is insufficient was forcibly brought home to me while I was watching a circus performer throw daggers and toss balls. The performer, placing a man against a wide board, some ten feet distant, hurled a bunch of daggers into the board on either side of the man, each time missing him by only one or two inches. Then he began tossing balls until the air seemed full of them, and not one ball fell to the ground. Having witnessed with amazement his great dexterity, these thoughts occurred to me:

"I wonder what he is like when he talks? If he is married what does his wife think of him? If he has children how do they feel toward him? Or if he is a single man, what would I think if he should wish to marry my daughter?" I then realized that I knew absolutely nothing about him except that he was a dexterous machine. Then falling into a homiletical mood I thought of the great skill of God. "How wonderfully *He* can toss balls, and strew the milky way, and hurl Pleiades and Orion! Before such infinite skill the performance which I have just witnessed is ridiculous." Then the thought forced itself upon me, "What would God be like if He were to talk? What kind of a person should we find Him to be if He walked our streets, and engaged in business, and sat at the table as one of the family circle?" I then realized that if God could only toss balls and direct atoms we should really know

nothing whatever of His character. If He were no more than the uniform power of nature's laws He would too closely resemble gravity, or electricity, to be satisfying to His children. The human heart demands that, in addition to all this, God be individual, and spontaneous, like other persons whom we know, and with whom we hold fellowship. We enjoy seeing our friends run machines, but what an awful life it would be if every person in the world gave no heed to anyone or anything except the machine which he uniformly and incessantly operated! What a monstrous and oppressive idea it is to think of God, silent as a sphinx, spending an eternity with His mind so riveted upon the operation of His machine-world that He has neither time nor capacity for anything else. If such a God had time to think of it, He surely would envy the little child who can prattle, and laugh, and sing.

Fortunately this higher demand upon God is fully met in the religion of Jesus. For while our Father is a wonder-worker and a world builder, at the same time He has myriads of human bodies through which He can live a thoroughly social life. He is the most social Being in the universe; His desire and capacity for social relations are unlimited. He does not willingly leave one individual outside the circle of His friends. All His work in nature is for the purpose of providing instruments and conditions for a family of free children, among whom He may live as the free and adorable Father. It is no wonder that men cease to pray, when

in their thought God is divorced from everything individual and social. When men conceive of God as the mere operator of the cosmos, their highest concern is to keep out of the way of the machine. It never occurs to such men that God is able to treat them as sons, after the most personal and human manner. It is only in the laws of nature that His actions are mechanically uniform. In social relations His moods and actions change to suit the feelings and conduct of His sons and daughters. In *nature* God sends the rain and sunshine on the just and the unjust alike, but in *human-nature* He smiles or frowns according to each individual's deserts. In Jesus, God might say, "Come unto me," or He might make a whip of cords and drive the people out of the temple. Prayer does not cause God to change His wise and loving purpose, but it does determine *how* He shall execute His holy will. If the conduct of a child does not change the father's actions toward him, then the father is both foolish and immoral. Men should learn that God is even greater in humanity than He is in nature. For in the one, He is uniform power, while in the other, He is Father, Redeemer, and Friend. In the world of wills, God is individual and human. And His inner communion with us is greatly intensified and clarified when there is added to it His audible voice from without. The voice of God speaking to us through human lips awakens the voice of God within us. How wonderfully clear was the Divine Voice in men's hearts when God spoke to them through Jesus! Likewise when

the apostle Paul went to a new community, it seemed to receptive minds that God had come to town; and they were wholly justified in thinking so, for though God had been there all the time, powerfully through nature's laws and feebly in their darkened hearts, yet for the first time God was within their city in clear articulate speech, wooing them to Himself. This not only made God seem real to them, but it made it easy for them to believe and be baptized. Though able to rejoice for a time, yet heaviness soon came upon them after Paul's departure, because God too seemed to have departed from their midst. Neither were they mistaken in this, for God had no instrument remaining through which He could make Himself so humanly real to them, after His devoted and tried servant had gone away. As a result of Paul's early departure there would follow unbelief and conduct unworthy of Christians. To meet this sad state of affairs in the mission churches, God would write them a letter, or better still, make them another visit in Paul.

Once there was brought home to me in a very beautiful and unexpected manner the Christian truth about God's essential oneness with humanity. Weary from my afternoon calls, I had just returned home. Entering the side hall that was already dark, I saw through the door slightly ajar my little son and daughter at play. Philip, eight years old, was building up blocks on the floor, while Esther, two years younger, was standing under the electric light with both arms raised as high as she could

stretch them over her head. Seeing her dramatic position, and the unusual look on her face, I remained silent in the hall knowing that something was coming. With intense feeling she said:

"Oh, Philip! of course we would kiss God!" To which Philip replied:

"Oh, you couldn't kiss God. He is a spirit. Why, God is in you,— and in me."

Still standing in her dramatic position with the light shining full on her face, she began lowering her arms slowly, and as her expression of comprehension deepened she said:

"Oh well then, Philip, if God is in you and in me, if we were to kiss each other we would kiss God."

"Yes, that is right, you would," was his response. Then said she:

"Let us kiss God." He arose promptly, and the children, throwing their arms tightly around each other, kissed God.

If ever there was a glad father I was one. Standing there in the dark hall I thought:

"God bless the dear children, they have the evangel. That is the very essence of the Christian religion, 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these ye did it unto me.'"

Of course we all realize that there are certain proprieties which adults must observe, but what could be more beautiful than for a little brother and sister so to recognize God in each other as to be able to kiss Him?

The idea here involved, if carried out in every relation of life, would be the Kingdom of God realized. Furthermore, there is no other way of making the Kingdom of God a reality, either on earth or in the life beyond. Doubtless God never will be seen outside the bodies which He provides for Himself and His children to use in common. However, we shall have more to say about that later.

A Christian woman has beautifully related an incident which brought to her Christ's idea and experience of religion. Said she:

"It was my custom to retire each day to my own room for devotion. On one occasion when my heart was deeply oppressed my prayers seemed all in vain. Nevertheless, I continued to plead, 'O Lord Jesus, reveal thyself to me.' After awhile there came a rap at my door. It was the maid seeking comfort. She had broken a choice piece of china. But I drove her away rather harshly, saying, 'You know you are not to bother me at this hour.' Then I continued, 'O Lord Jesus, reveal thyself.' After more fruitless prayer, my little girl came sobbing for comfort as she had broken her first doll. I even drove *her* away saying, 'My child, you must not disturb your mother now.' After resuming what seemed to be a useless petition, there came to me a suggestion as distinct and forceful as if spoken. 'Inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these ye did it not unto me.' I arose from my knees, unlocked the door, and went out. In the kitchen I found the maid sullen and angry, to

whom I spoke comforting words. Seeing the light come to her face, I went on to find my little daughter. From under the grapevine where she had already cried herself to sleep, I picked her up; and after kissing her and wiping the tear stains from her cheeks, I told her that I would get her another dollie,— one ever so much nicer than the first. Having comforted others for His sake, and for their own sake, my soul was filled with inexpressible peace! And once more something spoke to my innermost being, 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these ye did it unto me.'"

Let no one draw the conclusion that her habit of devotion was worthless, for it is not very likely that all this peace and revelation would have come to her if she had been less inclined to pray. The intense desire of her prayer, coupled with the unpleasant incidents of the day, brought to her the fuller truth.

Though a minister may not neglect his sermons, yet there have been times when I have grown so desperate in my effort to prepare a vital message that I have thrown down my insipid and stupid manuscript to go out and find some needy, suffering person whom I could bless in His name. Whenever I have done this I have found God and my soul and a sermon.

5. Where does Jesus belong in the religious, social and thought worlds?

When the God Soul and the man soul unite, they so lift nature's forces up into personal life that the uni-

verse no longer lies in broken and confused fragments. Jesus is at the center of all things because all things center in pure personal life. In Him, the Father-spirit, the child-spirit, and nature's forces were so correlated as to be newly manifest; the child was completing himself in the Father, and the Father was fulfilling Himself in the child, while nature was serving as the common instrument of both. Separate the God Soul, the man soul, and nature's forces, and no one of them is revealed. Unite them as they were in Jesus and the meaning of all three appears. Christ's type of life brings all reality into accord because it combines everything into a composite, personal life.

If you wish to know God in the most perfect way, go to Jesus; if you care to know man as he should be, go to Jesus; if you would look upon God, man, and nature's forces in one radiant, wooing personality, go to Jesus. If it is the purpose of religionists, sociologists, and philosophers to trace reality to its highest form of expression, let them go to Jesus. Yes, let all men go to Jesus with their wealth of technical knowledge which they have gained in the wide fields of research; and in His presence, their treasures, like precious gems, will scintillate with a divine light. This conjunction in Jesus of all streams of reality makes Him the light of the world. In the same way, and for the same reason, every person would be the light of the world if the child-spirit rendered an obedience to the Father equally loving and intelligent. But this is the tragedy,— who has rendered

such obedience! It is the belief of many of us that Jesus was never disobedient, even as a little child. Though it were admitted that this could not be proved, still it would remain a fact that as Jesus "Increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man," His filial obedience identified Him with the Father. The oneness of Deity and humanity was so certainly achieved in Jesus that no one can rob him of His glory nor of His place as the Messiah. He was the first to open wide the door to God; yea more, He was the door. In Jesus, we come face to face with the personal God and with our Elder Brother who lived in God. In Him, the perfect God was living in man, and the perfect man was living in God, while unitedly they were living among men as a visible member of society.

Taking the world as it is, the presence of God in humanity could but bring both peace and trouble; it brought joy to the pure in heart, and bitter hatred and strife to those who loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. The weary and the noble were attracted to Jesus, while the vicious and the self-willed hurled themselves against Him with mad fury; but it was ever so, from the beginning of human history until the present hour. Whenever God has made His approach in human life, the evil-in-heart have opposed Him; they have killed the prophets, and stoned God when He came unto them. In our own day, many who speak beautifully of God in nature, are fiercely angry with Him when He appears among them in a good man; they are willing to believe

that God is in that part of nature which soothes their senses, but they are not willing to believe that He is in the man who irritates them by opposing their wicked ways, or by hindering them in their pursuit of ill-gotten gains and illicit pleasures. Therefore, when God in Jesus so fully and perfectly entered society, it is not strange that they put Him to death. However, in killing Jesus they unwittingly exalted Him; in this act they brought to light the heinousness of sin, the inexpressible love of God, and the compassion of the child Jesus for his sinful brothers. It is before the cross, if anywhere, that men are led to repentance; it is there, if anywhere, that the heart is both broken and healed. Before such wondrous love the world may well pause and sing:

"In the cross of Christ I glory, towering o'er the wrecks of time,
All the light of sacred story gathers round its head sublime."

6. Can God die?

Yes, God can die. Three years ago after the Sunday morning service I received a telegram saying, "Mother died this morning at six-thirty. Come!" Now, what did my sisters mean by this information; did they intend to convey the idea that our mother had become extinct? Not at all, they only meant that she had lost the dear old instrument that we had known for so many years in this earthly home. Death never signifies more than this to the Christian. Though we said she was dead, we believed

our mother to be more alive than ever. If death is simply the loss of our instrument, the body, then God too can die, for He may lose His body. God died on the cross with His child, because the Father-spirit, no less than the child-spirit, lost His beautiful instrument in which He had walked by the shores of Galilee, teaching and comforting the people. If Jesus would not forsake the Father in the agony of the Garden, we may be sure that the Father did not forsake His child on the cross. As they were united in life they were undivided in death. To think that Jesus any more than the Father was conscious of the pain, is to make Jesus greater than God. The God who creates the body, moment by moment, must know the thrill of every nerve, since they are His own nerves which He shares with His child. Yet it is not the pain nor the indignity heaped upon the Father and His Holy Child that we are here emphasizing, but the fact that He lost the instrument by means of which He had been a living person among men. The disciples scattered in sorrow and bewilderment, when God and His Child Jesus died on the cross. The Father had no form left on earth through which He could continue to speak *unerring* words of wisdom and love. One year before my mother died she enfolded me once more in her arms and blessed me, saying, "My son, I shall never see you again on earth." Hastening home at the summons of my sisters I looked again on the dear old instrument, but the hand of welcome was not extended, and the lips did not speak. In like manner when the

limp body of Jesus was taken from the cross, the lips no longer said, "I and the Father are one, He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Those lifeless hands were no longer outstretched, and pleading, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Yes, God can die; He can lose His human instruments on earth. He can likewise die to society by being *robbed* of His highest instruments. If no man, woman, or child in my city would let God come to articulate speech or deed through his body, God would be stone dead in Bridgeport; He would be as dead as the spirits whose bodies lie in our cemeteries. As already indicated, I do not mean, even in that sad event, that God would not still be in Bridgeport as the power of the all-pervading atmosphere, or as the mighty force of the waves that lash our shores. His energy would still be scintillating in the lamps of the white way, and shedding a soft light in the smaller lamps that brighten our homes; His would still be the energy propelling all the thundering mills of industry, and the power sustaining the nerves and muscles that operate the machinery; He would still be present in the blazing sun by day and in the twinkling stars by night; He would still wrap us round, and enfolding us in His great universe He would watch over us by day and brood over us by night; and yet for all this, if we entirely robbed Him of all His human bodies He, as a member of society, would be completely dead in Bridgeport. If in his own life every one killed God, men would then devour one another. As it is, God is partly

dead and partly alive in my city, as in all cities; and hence we are sometimes a blessing and sometimes a curse to one another. God may be manifestly alive in one person, and nearly dead in the same man's nearest neighbor; and He is more or less dead and alive in the best of us. When God can no longer get to the surface through men's souls, and bodies, and institutions, He is dead in that locality. And when God is dead through the loss of men, society is spiritually dead through the loss of God. The *living* God is not one who is driven out of His kingdom and reduced to a mere operator of the cosmos. The living God is not one who is persecuted by His children and driven from home while His business is going to rack and ruin. A living God must be active in His universe from center to circumference. Until our bodies are God's obedient instruments there is no kingdom of God. There is not the slightest reason for thinking there is a kingdom of God anywhere in the universe unless God has children somewhere who are permitting Him to live through the instruments with which He enfolds them. Until God is permitted to live in His own bodies, He is dead and His children are languishing.

If the Christian religion were understood and believed and practiced, what a transformation it would work! For instance, if every man, woman, and child in my city rendered perfect obedience to God, then every human body in Bridgeport would become His very own to use, and God Himself would throng our streets. We should

meet Him face to face in individuals and crowds. It would be Emmanuel, or "God-with-us" everywhere. All faces would be bright with the wisdom and goodness of God. Every individual would be our Infinite Father and our brother in one. What a rapid human growth would ensue! Every living person would be a window through which the light of God would shine. There would be young minds like the child Jesus in the temple, just waking to the mind of God, and ripe saints and sages flooding the community with God's vaster wisdom and profounder love. Not only would our immediate bodies be cleansed and transformed, but our augmented bodies would be brought into harmony with the divine Will. Our city would become a heavenly abode, and our industries would become the instruments of love and righteousness. We should tap a thousand sources of power that now remain idle, and finding unlimited resources within ourselves and our environments, we would work wonders. While making God's energies our enlarged and purified bodies, we should at the same time turn them into instruments of God's love. If God were permitted to come to the surface perfectly in all our lives, and in all with which we have to do, three years would not pass until people would be making pilgrimages from the ends of the earth to see the city "where *God* lives."

In a previous chapter I said that God, as a solitary person in the universe, would not mine coal, and run steam engines; but now allow me to say that if there is any-

thing God wants to do it is to get into the railroad business; and if He does not, it will be because men vote Him out. But in shutting God out of railroad corporations, what are we doing? Though not fully aware of it, yet we are really saying, "O God, you may be the energy in the steel rails, you may be the power in the wheels, you may be the expansive force of the steam, you may manage the chemical combinations of the wheat or other cargo, you may furnish us with our bodies, you may do everything but dictate terms of business. If, however, you want to sit at the desk as the senior partner then our answer is, 'Get down and out, O God.' We are glad to have you as our slave and lackey, we are delighted to use you and exploit you, but woe to the man or men who plead your cause in connection with our private business."

Such is the enormity of our sin, and the denseness of our ignorance when we shut God out of our business affairs. If God may not be in our daily enterprises He will not deign to be in our prayer meetings. This is the message of Jesus to all men, to employers and employees alike; this is the will of God, that *in* and *through* His children He may make all things vocal with His wisdom, and beautiful with His love. Scholars may look into nerves and brain, but the spirit is fully revealed *before* the face and not back of it. So the infinite God and Father of our spirits is fully revealed, if at all, in benignant eyes, friendly hands, willing feet, and gracious words. It is the way we grow our bodies, and shape our institutions, and manipulate all the forces of nature

that we reveal what manner of spirits we are. If our spirits are evil, then God is denied bodily expression. There is no use saying Lord, Lord, if we do not the things which He tells us.

CHAPTER V

LOSING THE SENSE OF IMMORTALITY

A general statement

The "what" and "where" of God is still incomplete so long as we confine our thought to the mere fragment of time measured by this earth life. Though we have found the unity of all parts in the Christ life, yet that unity is and can be but imperfectly realized by society on earth. A longer time and a wider sphere must be considered if we are really to know what God and man is. Therefore, God, man, and the universe must be viewed in the light of endless time.

If in certain respects this generation is conspicuous for its lack of faith, in other respects it is notable for its abundance of faith. The new knowledge acquired along many lines instead of destroying our belief in immortality is going to enrich it immeasurably when we have thoroughly digested the facts. In the meantime some minds are bound to be disquieted.

It is most fortunate that the majority of people seem able to accept the fact of a future life as something altogether natural and inevitable. Those who are not able to do so, however, appear to be increasing in number.

Yet we may rest assured that whatever will save the faith of the doubting ones will enrich the faith of those who find it easy to believe. And if those who doubt are not as numerous as sometimes appears, so much the better. Whatever the real situation may be, it is our privilege and duty to deepen and enrich our faith to the extent of our ability. That so many express doubts on the subject of immortality is something to be deplored and, if possible, remedied.

An old man, highly esteemed, despondingly said to me after the funeral of his friend:

"We hope there is something beyond, but we do not know."

In response to my word of assurance, he grew even more pensive and added, "No one has ever returned."

To say the least this life-long member of the Church saw nothing in future prospects to cheer his declining years. As I gave his feeble hand a warm clasp, I painfully realized that the light was fading from his soul as well as from his eyes.

On my first visit after the funeral of a senior deacon, his widow plaintively repeated the words of the old man:

"We hope there is something beyond, but we do not know."

My prompt response was immediately checked by a languid wave of the hand, and an emphatic, "*No one* can know."

This uncertain state of mind is in striking contrast

with that of the saints and martyrs; it cannot say, "To me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."

Some highly honorable people tell me that they have no desire to live again, and express wonder that anyone has such a desire. The good influence we may leave behind us, they think, is immortality enough.

A general loss of faith in immortality, I am confident, would work irreparable harm to society. It would completely destroy religion. The Church, therefore, should do its utmost to keep alive a rational and heartfelt assurance of immortality. This, I am sure, can be done without, in any way, stultifying the intellect. In fact, the intellect must be made our ally if we are to succeed.

At this point the remark of a woman ninety years old is very significant and reassuring. After reading a popular book of the day on immortality, she said:

"I did not like it. I do not want anyone to try to prove immortality by science, because he cannot do it. I grasp the reality of a future life with my whole being."

Why are so many people losing their assurance of immortality?

1. The contagion of doubt

There is a contagion of doubt as well as a contagion of faith. With facts still favorable to a victory, an army may lose morale. When the general and all his officers keep hopeful, their confidence works its way down to the

enlisted men. If the hopeful word is on many lips the morale is saved, and the whole army is confident of victory. Witnessing to any belief has a tremendous psychic influence for good or evil. The facts concerning any great subject are never deeply analyzed by the masses; yet the people possess a rare power for sensing the spirit of their times.

In the fight for Eternal Life the morale of the Church is too low. The confidence at the top is not always as rugged and commanding as it might be. Too many college men are confused in a jumble of ideas, and some of them, unfortunately, give their testimony on the side of doubt.

No one should give an insincere testimony for the sake of helping out a weak cause. Yet many college men are greatly remiss in not giving more careful consideration to a theme that vitally affects all human interests.

At all events, the masses hear many expressions of doubt, and are not slow to pass them on. A large number of people who stand aloof from the Churches hear a dozen denials to one affirmation of belief in immortality. Many radical socialists carry on a determined propaganda against belief in immortality for political and economic reasons. They say to the restless crowds:

"The Church is fooling you with the hope that the wrongs of this life will be righted in another; but there is no other. If ever you get your share of good things you must get it soon, for your life is short. Therefore, down with the Church and king capital!"

I am not fearful for the grounds on which the assurance of this great Christian belief rests, but I am disturbed over the prevalent ignorance and indifference manifested.

2. The inability to make a religious use of modern knowledge

The Christian view of life in its relation to the whole body of modern information has not been adequately given to the people. And they are seriously affected in consequence of this neglect. That irreligion does not tend toward assurance of immortality I regard as an incontrovertible position. Yet to say that all doubt is due to a lack of Christian devotion is not true. Many good Christians are confused, and seek help to regain the comforting belief that death does not end all. All clearly ascertained truth about the universe should prove a help to faith, but until people know what to do with so many new facts, they prove a decided hindrance.

Take for example just one popular subject of the day, physiological psychology: When taught by men who have never grasped the Christian philosophy of life, it affords the shortest possible road to atheism and the denial of the human soul. This modern branch of learning, though the finest of servants, is the meanest of masters. It has slain its thousands. Physiological psychology has its own field of investigation, but it is never safe when it parts company with sound philosophy.

3. The loss of a satisfying conception of the future life

In sharp contrast with former times, this generation has no satisfying conception of the future life. And naturally an indefinite and hazy future makes but slight appeal. Many instinctively turn from such a future to save their peace of mind. They prefer something that is definite and interesting. It is a matter of common experience that the heart will not glow if there is no picture on the canvas. Unless we can so adjust the lens of our minds as to project something more than confused colors, we shall never bring back the former interest in a future life. Unfortunately, there has not been much striving on the part of the Church to construct a future that will harmonize with the newly discovered constitution of the universe. And without this end in view all striving would be in vain; nothing will avail that does not relate the future to the divine framework of God's present Universe.

The common conception of heaven has been of something quite apart from the existing world as we know it. Among all with whom I have conversed, I have not found one who expects to have a physical body in the future life. They have erroneously interpreted a "spiritual body" to mean a spirit body. This crude idea of a spirit body is a fair sample of a hundred other fancies and misconceptions.

When the commonly accepted idea of heaven became as distasteful to the minister as it was to many of his con-

gregation, he stopped preaching about it. The laity may no longer be seen enjoying a rapturous contemplation of future bliss. Instead, they accuse persons so inclined of other-worldliness, and point out to them that they are not as good as they might be here and now. If for one reason or another we seldom give more than a furtive glance at that which lies beyond the grave. In proportion as the vision has gone from the mind, the sense has faded from the soul. The old picture of heaven has become altogether inadequate, and no other has been put in its place. Considering the sudden transition through which the world has been passing, possibly this state of affairs was inevitable.

4. The growing habit of classifying the future with things unknown and unknowable

At last there has arisen in the Church a considerable class that strives to discourage any effort to inquire into the future life. "One world at a time" is their motto. The future is classed among things unknown and unknowable. This type of mind is trying to arouse interest in the present by drawing attention from the future.

Said a woman professor to a student:

"If ministers would talk less of things about which they can know nothing and do more to help those about them, they would show more sense and accomplish a great deal more good."

I think I know some ministers who might do more for

their environments, but I happen to know of none who talk much about the future. This teacher so enthusiastic over a fragment of the truth has never suspected how meager and one-sided her education is. She has not grasped [illegible]ought of our age which recognizes, above everything else, the unity and solidarity of things. So she protests against any *rounded-out* conception of life. It is not strange, therefore, that immortality is to her a disagreeable theme that she would like to see tabooed.

A professional man once said to me:

"When you came on the train the other day our mutual friend, Mr. A. said, 'There is the Parson,' and then nudging me remarked, 'Say, he knows no more about the other world than we do, does he?'"

"So that is what you were talking about," I replied. "Well, I am surprised. I thought you were modern men, and knew that there is no other world. Science, philosophy, religion, and common sense, teach us that there is but one world, a uni-verse. We now live in all the world there is. But since we have not penetrated it very deeply, if your friend had remarked that the minister was no more developed than you, or that he had gone no deeper into the meaning of the universe than you, he would at least have been on debatable ground. When, however, two men of your opportunities could sit there and talk about another world, I am ashamed of you. The universe is as much one as my watch is one. Every particle of it enfolds us continually and never ceases to pour its energies through us. Every part of the universe is beat-

ing upon us to waken us, if possible, to its meaning. If I live for an eternity, I shall be in the same world as now, and what I truthfully know about it now will still be true after my body has decayed. God's one-world is the only world."

No wonder that people become confused and mixed up with their plural worlds, and broken fragments of worlds.

5. An inadequate conception of the Kingdom of God

More than a generation ago it came to us like a new discovery that while Jesus rarely spoke of heaven, the expression, "Kingdom of Heaven," was continually on His lips. This discovery turned the whole tide. And since then, "The Kingdom of God on Earth" has been the theme of the Church.

While heartily agreeing with this discovery, and sympathizing with the new aim, I still seriously doubt whether we have seen the kingdom of heaven in any such full-orbed sense as Jesus intended we should. Too often we unwittingly preach a kingdom of *earth* on earth; we leave something out. That which Jesus preached was somehow more religious. Surely it is an inadequate kingdom of God when it, as so often happens, degenerates into a *mere* scientific cooking-school, or a *mere* scientific system of sanitation, or a *mere* several other things lacking in God motive and God consciousness. The Kingdom of God is more than a program of social service; it is a God-filled and God-ruled society. A genuine

Kingdom of God on earth will be pervaded by a heavenly atmosphere. Even a social religion may become so unsocial as to eliminate the Head of society; it may consign Him to the oblivion of forgetfulness.

No woman, whose duty it is to be a cook, can be a perfect Christian while she is careless about the preparation of food for her family. Yet one may be a scientific cook without being a Christian. It requires more than beautiful, material conditions to make the kingdom of God on earth.

I know families with beautiful mahogany dining rooms and all that goes with them, whose good food is so well cooked that it almost melts in their mouths, and yet they give God no thanks. Indeed, there are those thus situated who think nothing about God.

This is not meant to imply that the conditions of poverty and ignorance are any more favorable to a Christian life.

Coming one day from a poor family's home across the street, my little son said:

"Papa, does Mr. R. love the Lord?" When I told him that I did not know, "Well," he replied, "I don't believe he does, because he sat down at the table to-day with his coat off and never thanked the Lord for his food. He just looked around and said, 'Pass the taters,' and that is all he said."

From what I knew of this poor man, he was probably neither more nor less a pagan than the man with a mahogany dining room. The doctrine of the kingdom of

God on earth, with but little consciousness of God, is surely increasing among rich and poor, both in the Church and out of the Church. And as personal acquaintance with God goes, the assurance of immortality invariably fades.

Many women, of varying degrees of intelligence and social standing, are doing commendable social work for the love of humanity with but dim consciousness of God. It has come to pass that fine women may whisk about in silks and limousines visiting day-nurseries and the like without bending the knee to the Father or remembering that the babies are God's little ones. Yet no right-minded person wishes to diminish the social service of this day by whomsoever rendered. On the contrary, he feels that the Church which overlooks the poor babies should have a millstone hanged about its neck and be cast into the sea. Nevertheless, a kingdom without the consciousness of God in the hearts of its subjects will never succeed in saving the assurance of immortality. The old religion could not succeed without a bottom, and the new religion will not succeed without a top. This topless kingdom, spreading far beyond the Church, is making many feel that they are better off without the Church. Some of these are sincere and substantial men and women, while others of them are extremely superficial.

Many of the latter class will tell you with real self-appreciation that they look after poor stray kitties, and feed the birdies in cold weather, and in fact befriend all the animals. Really, they are too busy with good works

among animals and needy people to go to church and, as one of them told me, they are not among the narrow-minded people anyway "Who believe in hell."

This generation needs to learn the necessity, and the sane psychology, of Christian experience. To put it plainly, it should be converted to God. With God in our thoughts and affections we can hardly be too careful about the material side of His kingdom; for the religion of Jesus means the spiritualizing of the material, all the way from our bodies to the end of the material forces that are at our command. Though ever so many cups of cold water be given, if they are not given in His name or with a consciousness of His share in the gift, the kindly deed will not impart to us Christ's assurance of life eternal.

6. We automatically lose the assurance of the future when we lose the reality of the present

Because he *has* nothing in his ice-bound world, the Eskimo hopes for nothing. There is nothing within his present grasp that suggests great things to come. Whereas, the civilized man hopes for a glorious future not yet attained because he sees that the present warrants such a hope. No one can reasonably hope for that which the present does not justify. Only let him be sure that he knows the present. Men who miscalculate the future usually do so because they fail to apprehend the present facts. We cannot judge what the fruit will be unless we

know the particular variety of tree. The future history of the universe depends upon whether there is a God *now*. Either there is or there is not a God. If there is, the one not knowing Him has a very superficial knowledge of the world that now is. A God-projected and a God-filled world will have a very different future from a world of mindless ether and mindless electrons. The discovery of electricity and some knowledge of its behavior were necessary before men could dream of electric cars and electric lights. When electricity and some of the laws were known, however, the dream was unavoidable, and like many another rational prediction it has come true. When the thought of God fades, Christian hope dies. If one is only *agnostic* with reference to the existence of God, he is simply agnostic on the subject of immortality. In exact proportion as we lose connection with the deeper realities of the present, we forfeit insight into the future. As one who is entirely ignorant of chemistry has no criteria by which to judge the future of chemistry, so the one having no personal consciousness of God, nor clear vision of the deeper meanings of life, has no data for a rational prediction of the future. Paul said that the rulers of his day did not know spiritual things, or they "Would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Not knowing God, naturally they did not recognize His purpose when they met it in the character and teachings of Jesus; so they ignorantly put Jesus to death. Things which their eyes saw not and their ears heard not, were recognized by those who knew God. "For who among

men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received the spirit which is from God; that we might know."

Our expectations for the future always rise spontaneously out of our vision of the present. Whether it will rain within the next forty-eight hours I can but imperfectly predict because I recognize but a few vague weather conditions. The weather bureau, however, with many more present facts at its command may predict with far greater certainty.

The man who knows nothing but a material universe cannot believe in immortality. Any effort to convince him is but a waste of breath. If he is right in thinking that the universe has no soul, then he is right in believing that there is no future life.

The Soul — granting that it has a Soul — is the best part of the universe. To have lost God, therefore, is to have lost the best part of reality. And the loss does not end here, for, in the best sense, we have lost the world also. Though its chemistry and physics remain the same, its higher meaning and finer uses no longer exist, for us, when God is eliminated. To comprehend the universe we must know it philosophically, poetically, and religiously, as well as scientifically. Some unwisely think that to know it scientifically and poetically is enough. If the forces of nature are energies proceeding from an Infinite Mind, and if we might so use these forces as to express His wisdom and love in all human relations, then the

universe is fundamentally different from the atheist's world. The one who does not recognize an infinite Mind of love and righteousness, must prostitute the world to uses lower than the highest. And as soon as he does this he has not only lost the Soul of the universe, but in the very finest sense he has lost the body of the universe as well. On such a poor foundation, his common sense saves him from the folly of trying to build a temple that pierces the skies. He may still remain a gentleman, and have a most kindly and unselfish disposition within certain limits, but at a thousand points he will find his will at right angles with the one who lives in a different world,— in a world that warrants the long look. I have experienced the world from both points of view. And though my common conduct did not vary greatly, yet when I was deeply conscious of God, and saw the universe all vibrant with His thought and love, my life in its inner meaning and quality was different from center to circumference.

Here, then, is the crux of the whole matter. In so far as we have lost the assurance of a future life, it is because we have lost so much of the present that what remains of it is not sufficient to arouse a lively anticipation of immortality. True, our sense of reality is oppressively intense in the physical realm; we clutch, with death-like grip, that from which the Soul has escaped. But the husk will not support spiritual life nor give assurance of the life to come.

CHAPTER VI

FINDING THE SENSE OF IMMORTALITY

How shall we find the assurance of immortality?

1. We automatically find the assurance of the future when we find the reality of the present.

Naturally, assurance will be found, if at all, where it was lost. We shall automatically find the assurance of the future when we find the reality of the present.

It is not claimed that all professing Christians have a firm grasp on reality; for when religion is no more than a superficial formality, its credulous devotees experience neither truth nor doubt; they are religious automatons. But if we do not allow such Christians to attract us to heaven, neither should we permit them to drive us to perdition.

If one succeeds in finding God, if he learns to grasp the religious significance of the universe, and if he achieves a personal experience of the kingdom of God, assurance of the future will come unbidden and unsought. These great and present realities are the gateway to life and the guarantee of good things to come. *Only let one find, assimilate, and build upon this three-fold present, and the soul will blossom into hope.*

Some reasons why the quest for reality is not more frequently and earnestly undertaken.

a. The moral failure of Christians

Some refrain from any effort to make religious attainments because of the moral failures among professing Christians. But there are many failures in business, education, citizenship, and every other line of human endeavor that is worth while. On that basis a person would refuse to live at all. We all know there are some religious sceptics who are much more upright than some believers. From a Christian civilization they have inherited strong wills, a deep moral sense, and physical bodies with no marked weakness. Many of them have kindly dispositions and charming graces. Among their most helpful friends and favorite authors they count many of the best religious people. They themselves are one of the best by-products of Christianity. If they did not live in a Christian civilization they would not be what they are. Many such are doubters simply because they have not found their religious teachers. They have probably encountered that which, for their type of mind, was a very unfortunate religious environment. It would have been better for some people if they had had different parents, or a different Church, or both. However, it is a simple matter of observation that a large percentage of humanity is weak whether believing or sceptical, whether it goes to Church or does not go to Church. A man who

has a real saint in him may at the same time have seven devils in himself to fight. With no patriotic ideals or emotions some men can keep morally straight, while some noble self-sacrificing patriot may, if he is not very careful, fall into the ditch. It is fortunate that some doubters are so good, and a pity that some Christians are so bad; but regardless of just how good or bad any of us is, if this universe has a Soul it is of the greatest importance that we make His personal acquaintance and learn His plans; and if in anything we have deviated from His plans we should humbly repent and get in line with the Power that must ultimately break us if it cannot make us. If one is strong enough to perform ordinary duties without the conscious help of God, that is no reason why he should run away from his Father and treat Him with silent contempt. The Father desires the company of His son, and in a thousand ways great and small needs His son's help.

b. Because the average Christian cannot answer technical questions

Others regard the religious verities lightly because the average Christian cannot answer technical questions pertaining to his faith. Yet there is not one cultivated person in a thousand that can answer technical questions concerning the material universe in which we all live. The most highly civilized and prosperous community succeeds simply because it relies on the technical knowledge

of the few. Most of us know electricity neither practically nor theoretically. Even among practical electricians, how many could answer more than the simplest questions? It requires no profound knowledge of the subject to wire a house and give its occupants light and comfort. Yet the practical electrician knows as well as the expert that he is dealing with a real force, and may be able to wire the house better than the theoretical electrician himself could do. How many good cooks are there who could chemically analyze the food which they have prepared for their families? It is absurd to expect the average Christian to go into all the psychology and philosophy of his religion; as it is absurd to deny the reality of his experience because a full analysis is not forthcoming. The large majority of people have neither time nor qualifications to go into an exhaustive and technical examination of the philosophy and science of religion, any more than they have to go into the philosophy and science of the material world. Fortunately, a more practical way stands wide open to them. Because men are men, they may possess the great realities before they can adequately explain them. They know the stars before they are astronomers. They have an implicit knowledge of God which under right conditions becomes explicit. They have intuitions and common sense, the foundation of all knowledge. It is their privilege, likewise, to put things to the severe test of use. In the material world men risk their lives and fortunes on the truth of sciences of which, at first hand, they are totally ignorant. But

by so doing they find themselves the richer and the wiser. Likewise, the Christian multitudes who take the spiritual world practically, find themselves the recipients of untold blessings. Their knowledge, to be sure, is only practical, but it is their knowledge, and they would be willing to die for it if necessary. One may have the reality without the analysis, or he may have the analysis without the reality, or, unfortunately, he may have neither. The happiest possible situation is where he has both. A man may be justified in giving money and labor for the support and extension of religion without himself being a psychologist or a theologian. Just as the men who have given the most money for the advancement of the sciences do not know enough about these sciences to teach them. Yet we do not call them fools; we highly esteem them as philanthropists and benefactors. They are often as intellectual in the practical world as the scholars are in the scientific world. The practical and theoretical everywhere supplement each other.

There should be experts, by all means, who know religion technically as well as practically. And to these many inquiring troubled minds should go for help, just as the business man goes to the experts for knowledge that lies beyond him. Some sceptics take special delight in perplexing common Christians with the deepest philosophical aspects of their faith. Why do they not go to the experts? Many religious doubters never go to any one with their problems; while others of a more superficial character go to the religious quacks, and thence-

forward help to swell the ranks of some ridiculous or fanatical religion.

It is doubtless true that almost every one could find his religious teacher if only he would look for him; one who could interpret religion in such a way as to satisfy his reason and meet his deepest need. If there is any possible way of bringing honest doubters and religious experts together it should be done for their mutual benefit. But here is one of the gravest practical difficulties that we have to face.

c. Antiquated forms irritating to sceptics

Crude ideas still cling to the popular statements of religion as barnacles cling to a ship. This unfortunate and unnecessary fact drives away from the Church many conscientious minds. Though not many of us are scientists, yet we all live in a fairly well reconstructed material universe. Without knowing any mathematical astronomy our general notion of the heavens is fairly correct. Ignorant as we are of physics and chemistry, yet we have in our minds a moderately fair picture of a world that is compounded from the gases. The old picture of the material world has given place to the new, even among the uneducated masses. But, sad to say, the simple, complete picture of the reconstructed religious world has never been given to the masses. Sometimes we lug in a little of the dry and technical science that lies back of the new picture, but rarely do we give the picture concrete

and whole, unburdened and untrammeled by the technical substratum. As a result only a handful of Christians have the simple, modern conception of religion in anything like complete form. Yet no task should be easier or more delightful than just this work of giving the people a complete picture of the religious world in which we live. Recently I met a man who is a good worker in one of the most prominent churches in America, and I was surprised to find that his ideas of religion compare with those of his renowned minister as the Ptolemaic astronomy compares with the Copernican,— and yet he has no realization of the discrepancy. His capable minister should draw the picture for him. A great many sincere and genuine churches greatly irritate the sceptical mind because of the forms in which their religious ideas are clothed. Like a grapevine that is never trimmed, their faith is free and easy and of luxurious growth. To the critical doubter the suffocating atmosphere of the Church seems unreasoning and unreasonable. It is not that he wants something learned, but something that does not rough his mind into a state of irritation. The mischief done is great.

It is the imperative duty of some people to go to another Church; and in some cases to another denomination. Though the fault is on both sides, yet they will never be able to make a harmonious adjustment.

Instead of finding a church, or some specialist, that could teach him, unfortunately and untruthfully the sceptic usually decides that it is impossible for him to be a

Christian. So he resolves to be what he regards as an upright man and lets it go at that. But he does not find the great realities, except in a most vague and attenuated form.

d. The provincialism of sceptics

The most hopeless situation of all is where sceptics consort almost wholly with sceptics. They can soon kill the last remnant of religion that lingers in their hearts. The provincialism of doubt may be even greater than the provincialism of a bigoted faith. In their hearts, sceptics often try and condemn intelligent Christians with but slight knowledge of what the Christians believe and with even less knowledge of why they believe it. Many doubting minds take it for granted that all Christians conceive of religion as they themselves did when they were children in Sunday school, or boys and girls in a Junior Endeavor society. They think that a little scientific knowledge of the material universe makes anything more than agnosticism impossible. If their knowledge of religion and their philosophical knowledge of the universe were all that is known, they would be right. By learning a little more of religion, and by acquiring a better philosophical as well as scientific knowledge of the material universe many have regained their grasp on God. For such as have come to see God as the center and Soul of all things, natural science, instead of being a hindrance to, has become one illuminating phase of theology. As a Christian believer, I find myself continually going to ex-

pert scientists to ascertain their latest findings. And I can truthfully say that, from a religious point of view, their verifiable report is always interesting. It is good news. It lifts me to higher levels of thought, to nobler planes of social conduct, and to loftier heights of fellowship with God and men. God's blessings on any man that discovers anything new in God's world and reports it correctly!

A friend once said to me:

"I do not know whether there is a God or not, and I am not going to bother my head about it; I am just going to wait and see."

If, however, he finds himself alive after the death of his body, I venture to assert that the old problem of finding God will still confront him. We may rest assured that there is no ghost-God to be seen after death. This man has utterly misconceived of God and of the method of finding Him. Death will not be a substitute for spiritual development. If ever he finds God it will be as a Loving Intelligent Will, and not as a glorious ghost on which his physical eyes may look. "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." If we would know God we must seek Him as He is, and not as something which He is not.

Let the sceptic consider well this statement: So far as we can *see,* everything would necessarily appear just as it does if there were a God. I have never interrogated any one who could suggest anything to the contrary. If God actually exists, we shall never know Him as we know

beautiful forces constituting nature, are the modes of God's continuous will."

"What does God do all day?" Why, everything that is being done in the universe, except that which other wills are doing. And the child will is only combining his Father's energies and thinking his Father's thoughts. The child never works apart from his Father's enfolding powers. If we could comprehend all the dynamics of the universe, we should know what God is doing on *that plane* of His activities. Or, if we could know all His loving thoughts and higher purposes concerning His children, who are striving and building in the midst of these simple, enfolding energies, we should know what God is doing in the *moral realm.* The wall of partition is broken down, the veil is rent in twain; we live in the Holy Presence, since there is no other place to live. With Browning, we feel that the atmosphere "Is the clear, dear breath of God who loveth us." The pavement on which we walk is the power of the Great Will bearing us up. Likewise, the buildings along the street are more of His beneficent energies, providing shelter and rest for His loved ones. Our bodies are also His energies, highly sensitized, through which we become beautifully aware of our surroundings. All the vitality in the quivering beams of ships, and all the propelling force in their engines, is but the power of a Will, and that Will is the Father of our spirits. Leaving out of mind for the present the thought of the vast universe, measure, if you can, the ocean in its breadth and depth, which in

its ceaseless rising and falling raises and lowers ship-cities as if they were snowflakes; and then remember that, if rightly applied, there is power enough in each cup full of water to destroy a ship, and that all the energy of the boundless worlds is but the will of Him in whom we "live and move and have our being." Having done this, if you are not something less than a man, you will fall down and adore in wonder, love and praise. To be brought face to face with God in the beauty and awfulness of nature is the only cure for the irreverence of this generation.

But some one says, "This makes God too great. Have you looked, and staggered before the limitless heavens?" Yes, but is it not claimed that God is Infinite? — and we have not yet found the equal of infinity. With all our insistence upon the infinitude of God, perhaps it offends some to think of Him as being equal to His universe,— or even to the little part of it that we can imagine. However, God must be greater than all His works.

This is pantheism, says another. No, pantheism though containing many beautiful truths is, nevertheless, a golden mist. Its advocates have eliminated personality, they have broken the mast of their ship, and all the riggings have fallen down with it. Being the perpetual cause of all things, Self-conscious Will is the greatest fact in the universe. There is a clear distinction between God and His deeds, even as there is a distinction between myself and what I am now thinking and doing. This

never a proof. Even in mathematics we do not prove, we see. Not a single proposition in mathematics is proved; its truth is only perceived. The so-called proof is but a method of separating the elements of a condensed proposition so that these elements, one by one, may be recognized. The certainty began with one or more axioms, and proceeded with rules built upon observation, and the certainty at every step to the finish rested on something self-evident. A prominent man assured me that he could prove that two and two were four. However, the first thing I learned in Geometry was that an axiom was too self-evident to be capable of proof. The highly complex methods which we have devised for reducing intricate mathematical statements of their axiomatic verities we call proof, but the term proof can only be used in this accommodated sense, for fundamentally we have proved nothing; we have simply increased our intelligence by using a speedy and ingenious method of looking. When it is said that one does not know how to prove a proposition, it only means that he does not know how to separate and arrange the elements in such a manner that the mind can see them. Fundamentally, *nothing in the world is proved.* When we clearly see, doubt flees and certainty comes. If in anything a person insists that he can not see, all we can do is to ask him to look again; or perhaps we may try holding the truth at different angles, or we may present its elements in some new order. If, however, nothing enables him to see, then in respect to that particular thing he is damned. I had a very in-

telligent friend who was dismissed from an important position because he was color-blind.

While some have much stronger religious intuitions than others, yet I think there is no normal person who may not, if he goes about it in the right way, achieve religious insight. It takes a great deal of maneuvering to get some people to see mathematics. And the average sceptic has not put forth the effort to see religious truth that the average pupil has to see mathematical truth. But I know sceptics who *have* put forth such effort, and they have succeeded. When a sceptic wins a faith, in the nature of the case it is vital. Saving faith in religion, as in everything else, is the feeling of certainty that follows clear insight. And clear insight into any subject depends upon intelligent study and faithful practice. While there are many things that we positively know, and many more that we may come to know, yet it is through rational experience, and not so-called proof, that we come to know them.

As hungry cannibals feed upon the body of a civilized man with never a thought that his trained mind would be worth more to them than his body, so multitudes feed upon the body of the universe with no thought of what its animating Will might be to them. To all who sustain such an attitude toward the universe, its body looms large while its Soul fades. As the cannibal missed the wealth and civilization which the larger mind of his victim could have brought, so the mere world-consumers miss that which the Soul of the universe could abundantly give. If

it were divinely conceived of and divinely used, the physical universe and the social relations therein would be infinitely enriched. But when the Soul of the universe is lost, and the body of the universe is narrowed down to the temporal uses of the materialistic mind, we have lost the best part of reality.

But if we know what God and the world are to-day, we have a solid basis for knowing what they will be to-morrow. The future is not a new life and a new universe and a new God, but the present life and the present universe and the present God to-morrow. The remedy for a hazy future is a luminous present. Since God carries all men, good and bad, in His bosom, what a pity it is that we allow sloth and selfishness to deprive us of His acquaintance and fellowship. A little play-fellow once refused to speak to me in the presence of his newly arrived cousin. Finally he said to his cousin with a sneer, "Dick spoke to me three times, and I never let on that I heard him." This cut me deeply. But I now confess with sorrow and shame that the God who carries me in His own life has spoken a thousand times to me when I never let on that I heard Him. I have often tried to forget Him that I might enjoy pleasures of which He could not approve. All souls are in touch with God, and in that sense know Him, even when they do not recognize who or what it is that touches them; they are like the fishes that know the water but can not find the sea.

At last it has come to this: I have simply learned to see the universe that enfolds me, as the present energy

of an intelligent Will. I see that Will coming to human expression in me, in my Christian friends, and in a social kingdom of infinite possibilities. That which I see *works,* and *coördinates* with all that I know, making me more glad and more strong as the years go by. God seems to live in me and about me and through me. That in which I live and from which I cannot escape for a single moment of my existence, I do not try to prove. My task is to see it more intelligently and to adjust myself to it more perfectly. I can testify that the more I learn and *the better I live* the more clearly do I see that that in which I live has sense as well as chemical energies; and that its deeper meaning and purpose may get to the surface through my life. I no longer live in a dirt world, but in a mind world. I believe neither in a muck world, nor in a ghost-God who is somewhere in hiding. My universe has come to be a Will in action, a Will that enfolds me with its energies and does not let me go. When the universe is otherwise conceived I do not like it. My intellect and instincts rebel against a universe materially conceived and materially explained. It is too twisted and dwarfed for all the facts. I am rationally convinced that I see a larger and better world.

To me, worship is the deeper penetration into that Will in whose enfolding energies I live and move and have my being. My world has become an oratorio with both peaceful and dramatic passages. I get nerve thrills from its music; and more, since its text is written in plain English, and not in an unknown tongue, I see the majestic

pageant of a well-ordered creation. I understand what the music is about, and experience a joy infinitely beyond what I should if the music were without words. And though I meet some severe hardships, yet I am convinced that this is the best conceivable world in which to *begin* a life that is to live forever. History helps me, science helps me; and I feel myself borne along by a union of forces toward a glorious goal. God becomes more and more articulate in me and in all men and in all nature as we learn to will His will and to use nature's forces as the instruments of our enlightened and purified spirits. I also find that this vision will not leave me unless I live beneath my best. If, therefore, my best life and best vision go together, it would be folly to do anything that would break the harmony.

Some may say, "this is nothing but the way *you* see things, why not give us something more?" No one has anything to give beyond what he sees, unless he gives what some one else has seen; and that is entirely uncalled for if he can not tell it better than the other man has done. The only justification for the appearance of another book is that the author thinks his vision is sufficiently like what others see, and at the same time enough different to make it useful. "But I can't see it your way," some reader may retort. Well, I am sorry. Obviously, if we are sincere, it is for us to go on living and preaching the gospel with the hope that some day he may come to see. The Master Himself was shut up within the same circumscribed method. However, my contention is that if

we have "pure hearts," and are not unnecessarily confused in thought, or possessed of erroneous thoughts, we know God here and now. This is the luminous present that clarifies the hazy future. Not all men know God, but in my opinion all may know Him if they go about it in the right way. Every human being, consciously or unconsciously, must submit to having his life moulded by a world with a God or by a world without a God, and the finished life will be as different as the two worlds.

3. The final step in the effort to know God

To know God and to win the hope of immortality one must do more than formulate a set of correct ideas. Correct ideas will greatly aid, yet alone they are utterly inadequate. When the scientist gets his idea, he proceeds to experiment with it. If he does not at first get the hoped-for results, when the idea is clear and impelling, he performs his experiments over and over again in the most painstaking manner. In religion, however, many will never go beyond the idea. They wish to have the idea fully established without experiment or application. The reason for this difference is that, in religion, the experiment can not be made on carbon and zinc, but it must be made on the man's own soul. The experiment cuts right into his moral, emotional, and sentimental nature. How often a man will admit, "I can see no flaw in your idea, but I am not convinced that you are right." When the scientist gets his idea, whether it is true or not, he

acts as if it were true until he has tried his experiments, and does not always abandon the idea when his tests fail; he realizes that the fault may have been in the experiment. Many of the greatest facts in science have long been baffled by faulty experiments. Like consequences occur in religion. If instead of going on to the experiment and application one keeps repeating forever the question, "I wonder if the idea is true," he will never get anywhere except into a deeper state of doubt. A wise person while putting his best idea to the test will say, "I am hopeful that it will turn out favorably because it is such an attractive, promising idea." Religious ideas must be planted in the soul as seeds are put into the ground, and allowed to remain undisturbed long enough to germinate. It is most fortunate when children, through experimental knowledge, have been taught to love good types of religion and music; and this while they are receptive, and before they are ensnared by a thousand other influences. Yet no one, at any age, dare neglect his religious duties and privileges if he wishes religion to be an impelling power in his soul. In my youth, mathematics was a great inspiration to me, but through neglect my mathematical lamp burns low. To keep mathematics interesting and alive one must work problems applied to constructive business.

For an example of a man who attained unto great religious certainty, take Paul. He experienced a radical revision of his religious ideas, but his improved ideas were not enough. To test their validity he hurled himself

upon the Christian verities with all the force of his being; and in consequence, found a life of intimate friendship with God. Thenceforward Paul had great things to tell and magnificent things to achieve. "I can do all things in Him that strengthened me." He felt that nothing could break this new bond. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." His friendship with God gave him a new conception of, as well as a new interest in, society. "So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another." God the Father "Is over all, and through all, and in all." Paul's insight broke all former bounds; it elevated him to a boundless and timeless world; his insight gave him a deep sense of God and became the evidence of many things not yet achieved. Here was personal assurance of God and immortality deep, strong, and jubilant. Whence came it? Such assurance is inherent in a life spiritually nourished and divinely employed. Hope simply comes to such a soul, like color to the ripening apple.

This generation, though engaged in many noble charities, shows marked signs of under-nourishment; its mind is active in the acquisition of material knowledge, and its body is overworked in the effort to accumulate wealth, yet its soul languishes. And there is a near likeness between a starved soul and a starved body.

Without hope or courage, a little girl sits staring out of great innocent eyes because she is under-nourished. This poor fading flower is in striking contrast with the little apple-cheeked girl in bloomers who believeth all things and hopeth all things and (as her brother knows) can do pretty much all things. This startling difference requires no lengthy explanation; nourishment and exercise tell the whole story.

So in our day many languid souls ask, "Where is thy God, and who knows whether there is a life beyond?"

For an instructive contrast, place beside such a life the life of Jesus. Living in the bosom of the Father, doing the Father's will day by day, seeing life in the light of divine love, and witnessing the effect upon those whom he won to a life of love and service, made it impossible for Jesus to lose faith in immortality. While enduring the pain of the cross He could say to the malefactor, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

The abundant, buoyant life nourished in the life of God and exercised in the service of God and man, is the source of hope for the life that is yet to be.

4. Conscious of the existence of God, we become certain of immortality

It is clear as daylight that God Himself will be defeated if He *loses His family*. Attention has already been called to the fact that, with the loss of His family, God would be reduced to a child-god playing with a toy world; and

that without the coöperation of other wills He could not finish His toy. He would be in the position of having a world full of raw material, material capable of infinite, spiritual and social uses, only He would be destitute of any such help as would enable Him to turn the universe to any account whatsoever. If He were left solitary in the world, all God's labors in creation would lead directly to shameful defeat. Without other inhabitants than Himself, the universe would become one colossal piece of junk. Yes, it would be worse than that; even junk has value where there are people. Without intelligent souls to inhabit the universe, an appalling night would settle over all creation. Love, truth, wisdom, righteousness, and the last semblance of a kingdom would be gone; and God Himself would as well die with His children; He would be destitute of character, and incapable of completing that which He began on such a magnificent scale. Having a universe like the present on His hands, with no one to use it, nor to inhabit it, God would be an object worthy of ridicule. The idea that God could murder His children, or carelessly allow them to perish, and then spend an eternity in an unfinished and depopulated world shatters reason itself; such a thought is too appalling and abhorrent to be entertained for a moment. Just as sure as there is a God, we shall continue to live. Anyone who believes in God and does not believe in immortality surely never gave two consecutive logical thoughts to the subject. (1) *Ultimately God will have no children at all,* (2) *or He will have an endless suc-*

cession of short-lived children, (3) *or He will have children that survive all changes.*

The first obnoxious idea we regard as impossible and unthinkable. A being that could live in perpetual and absolute solitude, with no more reason and character than such a position would warrant, is not a person that we should call God anyway.

The second thought of God having an endless succession of short-lived children is in some respects worse.

In the autumn of nineteen hundred and fourteen, a friend said to me:

"What *is* there, I should like to know, in Christianity? Here we've had the Christian religion for more than nineteen hundred years — and now this war. Oh, there is nothing in it!"

"No," I answered, "we have had Christianity about thirty-three years; that is, a few people have had it."

When asked what I meant by such a statement, I told her that the earth was inhabited only by children; that the average age of all living people was only about thirty-three years; and that they would scarcely get beyond the spanking period until their places would be taken by another set of babies; and that these new babies would scratch and bite, and be tempted to lie and steal just as all the babies before them had done; and that these in turn would soon give way to another set of babies. I told her that all the knowledge and character on earth would, in a few days, need to be transferred to the minds of babies not yet born, or it would entirely disappear from

the earth. "Moreover," I said, "how do you know what Christianity has accomplished? You have never been where the Christians have gone? What do you suppose the Apostles and all the Christians who are nineteen hundred years old have been doing; and the multitudes who are eighteen hundred years old, and so on down through all the centuries? You have seen only a succession of kindergarten classes."

Though progress on earth rests exclusively upon successive groups of children, yet we gladly recognize the social achievements that have been made during human history. We keenly realize also the sin we all share in not having produced better social conditions than now exist. Nevertheless, I am absolutely certain that no succession of infants will ever be able to put this universe to its highest possible uses. God will never get far with His great cosmic enterprise if He employs only ignorant little children; and that is clearly what He is doing if death ends all. What a pity and shame it would be to throw away such a universe; a universe of infinite intellectual, spiritual, and social possibilities. And what a crime it would be to destroy the intelligent beings who could turn the universe to full account if only they were allowed ample time. That God will not do anything so foolish and wicked we may safely rest assured.

At the close of one of my services a man came forward and spoke to me, saying:

"If everybody were good, your job would be done."

"Now I must scrap with you," I said. "If all were

good, I should have a larger and a better job. The good people, and not the bad people, have the greatest desire for Church. Why is the engine put on the track at all unless it is to go somewhere? For what purpose does anyone become a Christian, except to learn more about God and His plans in order that he may embody them in a kingdom of love and righteousness? I am too young and ignorant to preach you a very good sermon now, but if you will come around where I am a thousand years from now, I will preach you a sermon that will make you sit up and take notice." Something must be left out of the mental structure of one who can make such a statement as this man made to me. In the face of such conceptions of life one wonders that religion commands the respect that it does.

There is no doubt concerning the unlimited possibilities of the universe, nor of the limitless possibilities of the human spirit if it is given a chance. Standing as many of us do on the threshold of these greater possibilities, who but a devil could shut the door in our faces? If God wanted us when we were ignorant and sinful, He wants us even more now that we are a little wiser and a little better. If He intended to crush us before we were fairly started why did He ever raise us to such hope by allowing us to see the infinite possibilities?

As to our ability to survive the shock of physical death, if God made us live in the first place, He can make us live on through all changes. If, however, God alone survives He will be quite worse off than His dead children;

they will simply be extinct, while He will go to the gloomiest sort of hell. Who could wish to be a mad god living alone through eternity in a graveyard? With everybody dead, and all kingdoms gone, and all work at an end, the universe would be one vast — desolate — hell; such as a bad God would deserve. How *can* any one believe in God and not believe in immortality?

CHAPTER VII

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE WHETHER WE BELIEVE IN IMMORTALITY IF WE LIVE AS WE SHOULD IN THIS LIFE?

1. How can one live as he should?

Some say, "What difference does it make whether we believe in immortality, if we live as we should in this life?"

We also would ask a question. How can one live as he should if he eliminates God and His plans? God planned a "whole" or He planned nothing.

We willingly admit that some honest doubters have a larger share in God's life than they realize. They have heard the message of truth and love, and though confused as to its origin, they accept much of it as binding upon their lives. In many things they conscientiously do God's will without recognizing it as such. No one is so bad but that he sometimes obeys God. The meanest man thinks some of God's thoughts after Him, and makes some voluntary sacrifices. It may never occur to him, however, that God has any part in the matter. Yet no one lives as he should until he lives the highest type of life of which he is capable. It is easily possible to be

doing good in one direction while exerting a baneful influence in another direction; and easier still to be overlooking something of grave importance. Many well-meaning persons pursue courses of action that work great harm to themselves and to others in the long run. No one should flatter himself with the thought that he has lived as well as he should, until he has lived as well as he could. No man on the outside of a business can do what he would if he were on the inside. A really good man must try to know God and the plans of His kingdom from within; he must take daily orders; he should be strictly honest toward God; he should feel the joy and enthusiasm that come from partnership with God in a great enterprise. But this type of good man will most likely feel sure of immortality. A lack of assurance is a practical proof that something has gone wrong in the life; it may be confusion or indifference, but more likely it is both.

2. The difference in social service

Unless we know what the superstructure is to be, it is impossible to lay the right kind of a foundation. A good foundation for a bungalow would not answer for a fifty-story skyscraper. And to put a skyscraper foundation under a bungalow would be the most foolish waste of time and money. Paul gave up everything that the average good citizen holds dear, and spent his entire life in laying the nobler foundation. He believed that the superstructure would be stupendous, and of eternal dura-

tion. No sane person would live the life Paul lived unless he believed in immortality. The same is true of Jesus. Here is a clear-cut and portentous cleavage between good people who are Christians and good people who are not Christians. I do not mean to intimate that a patriotic agnostic would be any more reluctant than a believer to die for his country. It is largely a question of what he considers is worth while. A good sceptic is willing to help educate and civilize in a general way, but he will put forth no effort to evangelize. He does not realize the impossibility of civilizing a non-religious world. He would permit the whole race to be non-religious like himself. He would send all the billions yet to be born into the future life without any knowledge of God or any spiritual achievement. His attitude would so overpopulate the future country with dwarfed and degraded people that our missionary work in a future state, if we are permitted to undertake it, would stagger a St. Paul. When we see the number and quality of our neighbors over there we shall realize the enormity of our mistake. And still they will come, the uncivilized and unchristianized descendants of ancestors whom we neglected. Almost every civilized community in the Christian world had its foundations laid by missionary effort; and it has been kept civilized by a work very similar to that of missions. The firmest ground of hope for the civilization of the race is in the combined educational and religious work of missions. Darkness cannot come to the light, but light may go to the darkness. The longer missionary work is

neglected the more of it will there be to do; and that which we leave undone here will be accumulating for us over there. With what amazement non-missionary Christians will face their accumulated missionary tasks in the future life! It is my impression that fifty per cent of the Church members do not believe in missions; that is to say, they do not believe in extending the religion of Jesus if it involves any work or expense for them. They themselves will first need to be saved, if they are to be like their Master and share any of His vision and compassion. Then there is probably another twenty-five per cent of professing Christians who believe but little in the extension of the gospel. So between the agnostics and the half-Christians, we are not doing a very good piece of social work throughout the world. And this is true whether we have in mind the future history of society on earth, or of society as it shall migrate to our future home. Whether or not we have Christian assurance of God and the future life makes a tremendous social difference both for this life and for the life to come. Unless we are active and aggressive in the work of extending the kingdom, every form of vice will thrive and multiply in our most cultivated and civilized communities. What hope then is there for benighted peoples where there is neither salt nor leaven? My experience of thirty years in the ministry convinces me that those who have their eyes on the whole earth, do several times as much work for their home communities as do those who believe exclusively in home missions. It is aston-

ishing what narrow service so-called broad-minded people can render, and what wide achievements can be accomplished by so-called narrow-minded people. Observation will show that it makes a vast difference in the kind and extent of social service rendered if one believes in God and immortality.

3. The difference in personal preparation

We tell our young people entering high school that they should decide at the outset whether they are going to college; and if possible which college, as the entrance requirements of colleges differ. What should we think of one who would ask, "Why need I bother my mind about a possible college course in the future if I keep busy and learn something well? What difference can it make?" Yet we grow weary with hearing the question, "What difference does it make whether there is a future existence if we live as we should in this life?" Do they suppose that it is easier to make the freshman class in heaven than it is to make the freshman class in college? I dare say the requirements are different, but if heaven is worth going to the requirements can hardly be less specific or exacting. Many people who never went to college are far advanced in things pertaining to God and His kingdom, while some college people do not know the a, b, c of religion. Their standing in a future life cannot possibly be the same.

Like many others, I was brought up to be honest and

hard-working from the beginning. According to ordinary standards, I was living as I should. Yet when I heard of college, and had hopes of going to one, a subtle change came over my whole life. While the old duties were performed in the old way, at the same time a complete revolution was taking place within me. The imagination and will readjusted everything to the new and larger sphere for which I hoped. Since no one thus far had gone to college from our frontier community, some of the neighbors thought me to be a foolish dreamer. What good would it do me anyway, was what they wanted to know, since I was already good in "figgers"? When I was probably fourteen years old, a young man told me of some one in another township who was going to study Algebra. "What is that?" I asked. "Well," he said, "it is something like Arithmetic, only they use letters instead of figures." "Now that," I promptly told him, "sounds foolish. Why aren't figures good enough?" "Ah," said the young man's father, "Algebra is a mighty fine study! You have noticed that merchants mark the price of their goods with letters. Now if you know Algebra they can't cheat you." So I made up my mind then and there that I would study Algebra.

My first experience with college catalogues, which came a little later, was both interesting and amusing. I had often wondered what there could possibly be to study beyond history, geography, and the three "R's." But at last with a college catalogue in my hands here it was: De Amicitia, De Corona, Trigonometry, etc. After

reading pages of unheard-of and unpronounceable words, I scarcely knew whether it was about something to eat or something to wear. Theological terms seemed plain English by comparison. In those primitive days it took one more year of preparation to enter the classical course than it did the scientific. For that reason alone I promptly decided to take the classical. Although I knew nothing of what either course was really about or what it was good for, yet I did not want to bear the stigma of any short cut. I wanted to learn it "all."

Though it did not take long to learn what the college course was about, yet it did take some good faithful application to prepare for entrance examinations.

Many people take their religion as some lazy boys — found in every high school — take their education. These boys have a very light regard for college requirements. John is certain that he is as good a student as Charles or a half dozen other fellows. He emphasizes the fact that a "grind" like James is the most unpopular fellow in school. All suggestions of future trouble fall on deaf ears. Every year train loads of these fellows go to take their entrance "exams." Yes, they arrive at heaven, or college, and may chance to see the lord of the institution. But some one calls them in to test their Latin eyesight, and another to determine their mathematical vision, and if their power of penetration is not sufficient for college subjects, back they go. This is a tragic experience for the lads, to be sure, yet they must learn that promotion means fitness. I have known of

young men entering the academy of the college town because they were ashamed to go back home. They were good fellows, but they lacked college fitness. Think of a good sensible fellow who has never studied arithmetic going to college! And then think of a good sort of person going to heaven who has never acquired the spiritual insight to know God! A man in college who is mathematically blind, and a man in heaven who is God blind! If one thinks of God as a visible Ghost in heaven, he will overlook many of the essentials until the pitiful disillusionment comes. And if he thinks of the future home as a doll's heaven, he will make no thorough preparation for entrance. When a young girl was once lured to a very superstitious church, a friend said to me:

"Well, what difference does it make — we are all going to the same place." But when I asked her if she would be willing to send her daughter to a poor day school or to some wretched music teacher, she had never thought but what that was different. Everything but religion must be properly taught; how that is taught does not matter, "because we all are going to the same place." On that basis, if all were going to live in New York City, I suppose it would make no difference what kind of superstition they were taught. The expectation of joining a higher and holier society after this life cuts as deeply into my present life plans and purposes as did the expectation of going to college when I was a frontier lad. No matter how upright and industrious one is in the ordinary affairs of life, take away the hope of college

or the hope of a future life, and it makes a difference at a thousand vital points.

I once intercepted a stone mason who was building a wall where the specifications called for a window. He was not at all inclined to be convinced of his error. After reading the specifications again he said, "I am right." "But," I replied, "you are confused as to directions." Then he appealed to a weather vane on a near-by steeple. When I informed him that the church had been moved and that the points of the compass were entirely wrong, he pulled down the wall that he had so perfectly built. He did not ask what difference it made so long as he was doing a good piece of masonry. He was glad to get the wall down before the superintendent saw it.

If, now, we go on the assumption that God has no plans in what He is building, then we must conclude that He is the most ridiculous person that ever went into the construction business. The shock of disillusionment when it comes, as it is bound to do, will be tremendous.

It is one of my greatest sorrows that so many of my friends are building solid masonry in their lives where God's specifications call for windows; and windows where there should be solid masonry. The windows in the life of Jesus all looked out on the side of love and eternity. The light of a heavenly kingdom was always streaming into His soul.

We make the same mistake in building our cities and social institutions. They but vaguely represent the human temple called for in God's specifications. And the

farther we depart from the plan the more difficult it will be to return to it. Paul told some of the people of his day that they might escape with their lives as from a burning building, but that what they had built contrary to the divine pattern would be reduced to ashes.

I once knew a merchant who had twenty acres of new land broken and planted with onion sets. A temporary house was built to care for a dozen or more workmen. The ground was pulverized to ashes, the onions were planted, and the weeds were kept down so that none ever appeared from the road. It was a fine piece of work. The men toiled, the onions grew and finally blossomed, and the field presented an attractive sight. But alas! the merchant had purchased winter-onion sets, and in all that field there was not one bulb to reward him for his pains. What difference did it make — he and his men surely did some good work?

Many there are who flourish like that field during the days of their strength; but when they ripen there is no bulb, nothing to garner. One of these men with the meaning of life exhausted at sixty remarked to me that one was too old when he had passed forty.

A short time before his death Washington Gladden was a guest in my home. As he sat in an easy chair after dinner speaking of other days, and especially as he spoke of his sainted wife, I noticed how old he had grown. Though his body had about run its course, yet the light of his soul had not been dimmed. In my heart I said, "What a dear old man you are, Dr. Gladden. You are

nearly all soul!" He had kept the faith. And it had made a difference; for him, for me, and for all the world. While the old man sat there and conversed with the family, the light of his soul sent a shining ray

"Far down the future's broadening way."

CHAPTER VIII

HOW SHALL WE CONCEIVE OF THE FUTURE LIFE?

1. Its relation to the present constitution of things

Granting that there is a future existence, are we not wholly in the dark as to what it is like? Is it possible to form any conception of heaven that is not offensive to the intelligent mind? Professor Leuba says:

"As soon as, no longer satisfied with a general assurance of unruffled peace and unalloyed enjoyment, we demand specifications, we find ourselves in the presence of ideas and pictures, either absurd or repulsive, or void of real attractiveness. The best gifted religious seers succeed in this descriptive task no better than the cleverest mediums."

Have we, then, no facts on which to build a rational conception of the future state?

I believe that a satisfying view is a possible achievement, because we have some very important and fundamental facts from which to construct a picture. The minor details, of course, are unknown to us, but the main outline, which principally matters, may be very clearly conceived. As we have previously shown, the future does not have to do with a new God and a new universe and

a new soul; but with the present God, the present universe, and the present soul to-morrow. The future is not some new thing; it is the old realities a little later, and a little more fully developed. That God will remain a stable factor in the equation, we may rest assured. And we can read nature well enough in this scientific age to understand that it is no sudden and fickle movement void of law and order. Neither are we entirely ignorant of our own rational souls that organize themselves into civilized communities by combining and giving shape to the forces of nature in which we live. We have plainly seen that neither God, nature, nor man has any worth or significance when separated from each other. In the future life, therefore, there is but one factor that is different from those found in the present constitution of things, and that is the loss of the present human body. And even this difference between the present and the future will be largely rectified, according to the Scriptures, by our receiving new bodies. For too long we have foolishly tried to show that the soul could live without a body; and this in the face of the Scriptural teaching, that God will give us new bodies. In our effort to show that the soul is able to live independent of a body, we have likewise run counter to experimental psychology and philosophy. Scriptures say we shall have new bodies. Psychology shows that the souls with which we are acquainted are dependent upon the body for consciousness and every intellectual achievement. Philosophy likewise teaches that man can not exist outside of God. There-

fore when these bodies with which God now enfolds us die, He must again enfold us or we shall perish. There is no reason for thinking that a soul can live if disconnected from God, and the universe of God, in which it lives. If God again enfolds a soul, that new enfoldment will be its new body. And it will not be a spirit body because that is a contradiction of terms. As the Scriptures teach, it will be a *spiritual* body; that is, it will be a highly refined and delicate instrument of the spirit — yet a real body. This new body, as was the case with the old, must be our first point of contact with the universe of God. And in the future life, as here, the whole universe will be our augmented body as we progressively become articulated with it.

So all the old conditions of the present life will be restored on a higher plane. Whether the new and refined body will closely resemble the old, is a matter of speculation. However, it must be the instrument of the spirit; and therefore it will have functions similar to the higher intellectual and spiritual uses of our present body. We shall be conscious in it and think with it, and through it we shall manipulate the forces of the universe. If we can keep well, and work without friction, and all pull together I see no reason why we should not accomplish marvelous things in this universe, and at the same time derive a very dignified satisfaction from it all.

However much advanced the new life may be, we shall still be the same persons living in the same God and in the same universe as now. We shall still be living for

the same social and righteous ideals as now, and our motive will be the same old motive of love and good will. God is not a naked spirit hiding behind nature. He is a Loving Intelligent Will revealing Himself by His outgoing energies which we call nature. In the future life, the same as here, God will be trying to come to the surface through the bodies which he provides for Himself and His children. And He will be striving, likewise, for a full expression of Himself through all the institutions that His children will be organizing out of His beautiful and boundless energies.

Nature is not the gross, crude thing that ignorant people take it to be. Neither is it something apart from God. With the little intelligence that a few have acquired on this kindergarten earth, we begin to see what a divine thing nature is. When it is better known and more wisely and lovingly used by God's children, all nature will be vocal with God's wisdom and love.

2. Where is heaven?

Heaven is some place, or many places, in our present universe. God will never leave His beautiful universe that is so infinite in its complexness, so vast in its dimensions, and so rich in its millenniums of development, and go off into nothingness to build some sort of mystical and ethereal heaven. Heaven will be as much a part of the universe as is this earth. And this earth is infinitely closer in its relation to the whole than we are now able to

comprehend. Almost daily, scientists are discovering new bonds between the earth and the rest of the universe. The inhabitants of heaven will not be less closely connected, but much more vitally and intelligently related to nature than are we.

There are doubtless many spheres in this universe that would make good sites for a heaven. And it would be interesting to know how many of them are already so utilized. "In my Father's house are many mansions." When we speak of mansions in the skies it would be well to remember that the earth is a pretty good mansion in the skies. The trouble is, being such poor Christians, we have not built upon it a very good heaven. While we have not been wholly recreant in building a heaven on earth, yet we have often cursed this mansion by constructing many hells of smaller or larger proportions.

Another reason for believing that God does not plan for a heaven outside the objective universe, is the deep desire of man to make his richest ideals tangible and objective in a book, a piece of art, a musical composition, a noble building, or some splendid institution. Life without expression and achievement, as we know it, is both unsatisfactory and dangerous. The same must be true in relation to God, as evidenced by His vast and beautiful works that have come forth unfolding out of the infinite past and now promise to expand and differentiate into the infinite future. Even in the sphere of human lives He has impelled men to express His wisdom, beauty, and purpose according to human modes of expression.

It evidently is not God's design to abandon His works of nature and draw back into His own thoughts and spend eternity in self-contemplation. He rather intends to utilize the unlimited capacity of nature, and the unbounded ability of His children, to give the fullest possible expression both of His children and of Himself in a kingdom which has form as well as soul.

In Chapter III I gave a description of the kingdom of God on earth. I shall now repeat that statement as an equally good description of the kingdom of God in heaven:

"The kingdom of God is a loving intelligent family, organized around the Father's good will, living in the universe as His home, using the forces of nature as the instruments of His will, and making all things vocal with His wisdom, love, and power."

So little has the kingdom of God been realized on earth that it is like a kingdom on paper in comparison with what has doubtless been realized elsewhere in the universe.

3. Will there be a Holy City?

There will doubtless be many holy cities and plenty of country too. The Holy City described in the book of Revelation was, in the thought of the writer, to be located on earth. While it should be our aim to build an ideal city on earth, yet like most of our aims it will probably fall short. If in some respects the City of Revelation does not appear to be the most desirable kind of place

in which to live, nevertheless, as a thing of symmetry and beauty it is a marvelous picture. A perfect city is a wonderfully attractive thought; and none the less so because one enjoys a vacation in the country. If there is no ideal city in this universe, there should be. New York, London, and Paris, in spite of the ugliness, squalor, crime, and disease which they contain, are very fascinating. They bring together so much knowledge, wealth, and power that one feels the mighty impact of it all upon his soul. If one lives under the most favorable conditions in a great city, his consciousness so blends with the whole that the city seems to be but his larger self. This is simply the fuller experience of that law of consciousness which makes a man feel larger when he puts on a fur coat, or taller when he wears a silk hat, and causes a woman to feel like her silks and plumes and fluffy garments. A city without crime, disease, poverty, or ugliness; a Holy City filled with art, music, knowledge, love, and every kind of fascinating employment; such a city would lift one into a sense of joy and greatness beyond words to express.

From our present meager knowledge of the universe, what kind of a city would be possible if all the laws and resources of nature were fully utilized? Considering, then, the millions of people who have grown rich in wisdom and character through millenniums of experience in the congenial company of their fellow citizens of a heavenly kingdom, what is it reasonable to suppose they have done in the way of realizing these possibilities?

Even with our limited knowledge of nature's resources, we know they could have built a city that would make the one pictured in Revelation look like a beautiful Christmas toy. And if the departed are living in our universe and not in a vacuum, what could have prevented them from achieving such a glorious result?

> "For thee, O dear, dear country,
> Mine eyes their vigil keep."

Every one is justified in viewing his life in the light of this larger perspective. For by so doing he not only prepares himself for better citizenship in the life beyond, but at the same time accomplishes a larger and better piece of work on earth. When we break our lives and the universe up into fragments, as so many do, we are like children playing with broken pieces of china. For each of us there is one life, in one universe, under one leader. Beginning in weakness, life grows into strength; beginning in ignorance, it develops into wisdom; beginning in selfishness, life expands into a kingdom of love and righteousness. At first we are submerged in the material; but finally we discover that the material is of spiritual origin, and that it can be turned to spiritual ends. Like true artists, we no longer scorn the material forces, but see in them all the latent image of the divine. Whether the image that finally appears shall be a devil or a God will depend upon the hands that shape the material.

4. Will there be music?

Though we may laugh at Mark Twain's caricature of the saint with his golden harp, yet music is not to be laughed out of this universe. There will be music, of course; though heaven will not run all to music, yet there will be plenty of it and it will be of the right quality.

We know perfectly well that this vibrant universe has unlimited musical possibilities, and that we have scarcely begun to utilize these possibilities either in the way of music or instruments. With the instruments improved a thousand fold and multiplied a million fold, they would call for such noble music as has never yet been written. With the technique possible to more highly refined bodies, with time to outgrow all amateur execution, with the leadership of all the musical geniuses of the ages, and with an unlimited number of voices and performers to select from, the music of a heavenly city should surpass our wildest dreams. And there is no sensible reason for thinking that there would be music without sound or that there would be musicians without instruments. We have no right to think well of God, and at the same time think ill of His forces with which He enfolds us.

5. Shall we meet our loved ones?

I see no difficulty in the way of meeting our loved ones in a future state. Of course, I could not abide perma-

nently with my parents, and they with theirs, and so on clear back to Adam. The great population would, of necessity, be scattered over a wide area. After reaching maturity we do not, as a rule, live with our parents here on earth. The connection is kept up by the different modes of communication and by an occasional visit. And though the distances there would, doubtless, be much greater than here, yet the means of communication and of travel would much more than rectify the difference in distance. In heaven, as here, we should probably have some friends near by and others remote from us. However, we have already overcome space to a marvelous degree on earth; and have scarcely commenced to use the resources of which we are aware. We not only have the omnipresent mail system, the telegraph, and the telephone, but we have made some use of the electrical pen, and are rapidly developing the wireless telephone. Scientifically it would be possible, even now, so to develop the wireless telephone that a speaker could be heard by every one in the United States at the same time. If we could project the images of those speaking, as we are hoping to do, we should have a very good hint of the possibilities of communication in a future state. With finer bodies, and finer instruments, and a better knowledge of nature's forces, it seems credible that we could see and hear our friends with but little regard to distance. There is no reason for putting limitations on the possibilities of nature, even here on earth; and much less reason for doing so in connection with the future state of existence. All

the suggestions are in the opposite direction. The X-Ray enables us to see through solid bodies. Radium, which has no appearance of light, will affect a photographic plate through a foot of iron. Actinium, one of the radio-active substances, is said to have a chemical activity which is about a thousand million times swifter than that of radium. And the discovery of new rays is getting to be a common occurrence. Everywhere, nature is suggesting heretofore unheard of possibilities; it is apparently vindicating what we have been saying, that nature is of God, and that we are enfolded in His energies for the purpose of using them. Nature, that proceeds from God, is doubtless as exhaustless as God Himself. There are no indications that it will ever fail His children as they move on and out into largeness of life and richness of experience.

We little children on earth, as previously illustrated, are in quest of omnipresence; and we are slowly achieving it by progressively taking on the universe as our augmented bodies. Then how much more rapidly may we realize this process of enlargement under the new conditions to which we are going? Not only shall we have finer bodies, but we shall be in company with those who for thousands of years have been learning the secrets of God and His universe. Our increased knowledge of the world in which we live does not raise new barriers between citizens of heaven, but suggests a thousand rational modes of contact inconceivable a hundred years ago. Every day I am more amazed at the way the natural

sciences assist Christian faith. Yet this is as it should be if all things come from God.

6. Shall we see God?

Certainly not as a ghost; but we shall see Him in the face of Jesus. We shall likewise see Him in our loved ones. Since all bodies are primarily God's, we shall see Him in every face, when the purified souls of His children permit Him to come into possession of His own.

One glorious evening in the springtime, I sat in the gloaming with my father by the roadside. From an exceedingly hard day's work we were "dead tired." Yet for our healing, the air was filled with the scent of newly turned turf and the fragrance of blossoms. A large drove of swine was crunching the corn which we had just provided them. The woods, beginning at the other side of the road from which we sat, extended into the deep valley. From the dark shadow of the woods rose the incessant din of the whippoorwills. As we sat there, feeling a thousand influences from the sweet mystery of it all, my father turned to me and said:

"I know you are very tired; we have really worked too hard, but the debts must be paid. I want you to know that I appreciate what you are doing. You have been a good boy, and I have confidence in you. It will not be long until I am gone. But what a satisfaction it is to feel that you will be a good Christian man accomplishing in the world, when I am gone, things which I

have not been able to do." As the golden glow of a late evening sky fell across his face, it mingled with the light from his soul and clearly revealed the Eternal. God had looked into my soul through that face, and I had looked into the heart of God no less than into the heart of my father. Yes, he has been gone many years, and I am here fighting the good fight, but oh my heart, what shall I see when next I look upon his face!

We may depend upon it, the invisible soul of God and the invisible souls of His children shall become visible through their bodies, through their activities, and through their institutions which are in common. Their spirits shall likewise become audible through music and speech. Our Father in heaven differs from our God on earth only in this: On earth there is so little to express Him, while in heaven there is so much. God truly has a throne in heaven, but the great white throne is the pure and loyal hearts of His children.

7. Will there be burdens to bear in heaven?

Heaven will not be too "soft" for our good. There is much bad work to be righted, and unfinished work to be completed. We shall have glorious tasks to perform, and splendid problems with which to grapple. Sharing God's purposes as well as His joys, we shall still be discovering the mind of God, and getting a firmer grasp upon His laws and forces; we shall still be organizing nature and society into a more glorious kingdom of love,

beauty and power. We shall be making the ideal real, and the unseen visible. We shall accept God's will in our souls. We shall accept His will in the forces of nature, and make His instruments more vocal and more radiant as time rolls on in eternity.

CHAPTER IX

LOSING THE BIBLE TO FIND IT

If the Bible contains errors, how do we know that any of it is true?

A GENERAL STATEMENT

As this volume is designed to be a simple guide in the deeper and more perplexing problems of religion, it would be incomplete without a brief consideration of how God has revealed Himself through the Scriptures. In the selection of material and in the method pursued, the author has been guided solely by what he considers the safest approach to the Scriptures and the best "first aid" for wounded Christians.

"In my opinion, the Bible is just about one-half true."

This was the quiet and serious remark of a young woman who had recently taken a Bible course in college. Like many others, she was judging the Bible simply as a work of history, literature, and science. Its progressive revelation of religion she had largely overlooked. The Bible is not properly appreciated, even as literature, without taking into account its main purpose; namely, to teach religion, and not to write infallible history nor infallible science. The biblical writers undertook to set

forth, in a perfectly human way, the religious ideas and sentiments that God awakened in their souls. Through succeeding centuries these truths grew clearer and more comprehensive until they culminated in the life and teachings of Jesus. The most elevated religious ideas and ideals found in the Scriptures constitute, in my opinion, the absolute and universal religion. Ideas and ideals superior to these are not known to man. That anything *could* surpass them, I cannot conceive. To convey these inspired truths to the world, the writers wisely made use of poetry, fiction, tradition, history, and physical phenomena; they conveyed the divine treasure to us in earthen vessels; and though the vessels are beautiful, yet they bear the marks of human imperfection. We all know that an illustration may clearly illustrate without its own truth being verified.

Our young college friend had lost the Bible of her childhood but, unfortunately, had not found the larger and better Bible easily within her reach if only she had known.

As already intimated, even the religion of the Bible was not fully revealed at once. Certain crude ideas lingered until they were pushed aside by a fuller revelation.

To be able to follow the inspired truths from their beginnings in the Scriptures until they appear full-orbed in Jesus is of very great value. Their full worth first appears when we know all the vicissitudes through which they passed while struggling for a place in the sinful,

stupid lives of men. The history of a truth is just as important as the history of a man; and fortunately the Bible furnishes a fair human history of every great religious truth. As the streaks of morning light grow brighter and brighter unto the rising of the sun, so the rays of God's light shine through the Scriptures more and more until the Christ appears.

As a progressive, trustworthy, and indispensable revelation of religion, the Old and New Testaments cannot be too highly appraised; but as books of science and history, they are sometimes overestimated. To believe that its religious value is destroyed if the Bible contains errors in history and science, is a position as dangerous as it is false. We theorize about the Scriptures more than we study them. Even in ministers' meetings, I have listened without profit to many heated discussions on the subject of inspiration. The discussions were worthless because they had nothing to do with the facts of the Bible. We might as well claim that the casket is a jewel because it contains a jewel, as to claim that the literary forms of the Bible are a revelation because they contain a revelation. It would be as sensible to affirm that the whole mountain is gold, as to declare that the human element of the Bible is infallible. Yet no one turns away from a rich gold-mine because the whole mountain is not gold; neither does he fear that the precious metal may not be distinguishable from the rocks,— else it would be of no more value than the rocks. If God had made one mountain of pure gold, it would have saved much trouble in mining;

but He did not give us gold in that way. He mixed the precious metal with common elements, and He mingled His truth with human thoughts and human institutions. All things considered, both religious truth and gold are more valuable for having been given in the manner they were. To deny the facts, or to quarrel with them, does no good. The sensible thing for us to do is to seek the gold and the truth with all our might; for if we seek we shall find. If one is careless, he may mistake "fools' gold" for the real. But, fortunately, there are ample means for testing both gold and religion.

How shall we find the treasure that is in the Bible? In the same way that we find the treasure in the mountain; by using our intelligence and strength in company with those who know most about it. Our prospects for finding God's word are good; because His word will find us if we are entirely sincere. If a person studies his Bible with the help of competent teachers, and at the same time keeps his heart wide open toward God, the great verities of the Scriptures will surely find him; and they will find him deeply; they will find him so deeply that he will be thrown into the dust of humility and, at the same time, lifted to the sky of hope. Yet who pretends to have found all the truth there is in the Bible? We can only find that which finds us. If we wish the Word of God to find us more deeply we must give it a better chance.

"Then the Bible is only for the learned," someone will say. No, the least educated mind can readily grasp

the most essential facts of religion as set forth in the Scriptures, and as expounded by a consecrated ministry. He can likewise hold to these facts with deep feeling and true devotion. If one is ignorant of science he is not troubled by unscientific statements. Whereas, the educated man is greatly distressed if told that he must either believe statements which he knows are not true, or else throw all religion overboard. If the Church tries to carry all the ignorance and all the trumpery of the ages as a part of her precious message she will break down under the load. Multitudes will turn from her with scorn. It is a sin against God and the human soul to make claims for the Bible that are manifestly not true. The Bible is so good that we do not need to lie for it; the light that shines through the Scriptures is able to make "wise unto salvation." Having found the great pearl that is in the Scriptures, one will experience the joy of being rich; and when he is once rich, he will not readily part with his wealth. Besides, other rich souls will bear testimony to the intrinsic value of his treasure; and best of all, God will bear witness with his spirit that he is not deceived.

The reader may ask, "Is it possible to find in the Bible that which nothing could induce us to relinquish,— something more precious than life itself?"

It is my testimony that we can. The religious truth of the Bible, having completely conquered my reason, commands my conscience. Its supreme message fits my soul as a glove fits a hand. The best that the Scriptures

teach, I find myself thinking. And I cannot avoid thinking the same without being a traitor to my own soul. Though I cannot believe every statement in the Bible, yet I think I should be committing mental and moral suicide if I did not believe and practice the essential teachings of the Scriptures; especially the matchless teachings of Jesus. Moreover, if one believes and practices the best there is in the Bible he will be a Christian whom the Master delights to own.

Important as our discussion thus far may be, it is not the main thing; it is simply our attitude toward the Scriptures, and not the truth which they proclaim. It is one more appeal for a rational religion without stating what the rational religion is. This generation has had altogether too much of that kind of exhortation. If we would but tell the good Christian people what the rational religion is, possibly we should not need to exhort them to accept it.

How may one find the Word of God, contained in the Scriptures? The method illustrated

1. The story of Creation

What message of permanent religious value is there in the story of creation?

In the story of creation, one thing stands out clear and distinct. *The universe is God's loving wish. Creation is God's will going forth.* God simply said, Let it be, and it was. So far as Christian scholarship has yet ad-

vanced, it does not realize how a thought more fundamental, spiritual, and moulding could enter the mind of man. That a loving God wills the universe, is the great diapason note in the hymn of creation. And the next great note is that of Divine appreciation,—"God saw that it was good." Then follows the note of blessing. And, finally, the child bearing God's image is made lord over all. These four epoch-making truths constitute the imperishable word of God.

These four truths represent the sum and substance of all I have been trying to elucidate throughout this book. Slowly, but surely, modern philosophy and science are helping us to understand this superb affirmation of Genesis, uttered thousands of years ago. Not that physical science knows anything about God, but that the discoveries of science make it easier for the intelligent Christian to believe that God willed, and continues to will, the universe. This idea of one good God causing and sustaining the universe by the mere fiat of His will, did for religion what the Copernican theory did for astronomy. As the Copernican theory made modern astronomy inevitable, so this view of God and His universe led unerringly to the Christian religion. And the Kingdom of God, in its vast sweep through eternity, will rest upon these fundamental facts so beautifully expressed in the first chapter of Genesis. That they were uttered so long ago, in a world of polytheism and low morals, fills the mind with wonder and praise.

The writer of this story, however, did not have a scien-

tific knowledge of the universe which, religiously and philosophically, he so perfectly related to God. But the religious value of the story is not injured in the least by the author's manifestly crude knowledge of astronomy and geology. In spite of all our advancement in science, since Bible times, our knowledge of the universe is still very crude. To learn *all* about nature scientifically will require eternity. It was the poetical, philosophical, and religious significance of the universe that the inspired writer discovered; science could abide its time. The writer of Genesis, like his contemporaries, regarded the earth as the center and main bulk of the universe. His universe was the child's universe, the universe of the unaided senses. On a very large scale the world, in his thought, was something like the old-fashioned cheese dish with a glass hemisphere over it. This huge covered dish floated in a universal sea. The glass cover, or firmament, kept the upper sea out except when its windows were opened to let the sea through in the form of rain. The dish, or earth, kept the lower sea out except in time of great floods when, as they supposed, the sea worked its way up through crevices in the earth. The sun, moon, and stars were supposed to be inside the vault.

This ancient conception of the universe pervades the Scriptures. In the twenty-fourth Psalm we read, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof: for Thou hast founded it upon the seas and established it upon the floods." Religiously this is superb, but scientifically it

is incorrect; the earth does not rest on a sea. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof:" for Thou hast hurled it into space and lovingly marked out the way that it should go.

The Babylonian bible, which is many centuries older than the Old Testament, says that Apsu and Tiamit first created the gods of order, or light. This corresponds to the first day in Genesis. But our author discards all these gods and goddesses when he tells us that "God said, Let there be light, and there was light." Whether light was the first act of creation or not, the best modern philosophy would confirm the statement that light was the result of God's wish. Light energy is a mode of the divine Will.

The Babylonian bible tells us that after Marduk had slain Tiamit in a great battle, he took his sword and cleaved her in two as you would a fish. With one half of her he made the firmament and fastened it to keep out the upper sea. This corresponds to the second day in Genesis. While the biblical writer does not change the Babylonian day, yet he has no use for the monstrous idea that the firmament was made out of one half of a goddess. According to our Bible, "God said, Let there be a firmament, and it was so." Our author, as the narrative shows, in keeping with the crude science of his times, thought that the firmament separated the sea that was above the firmament from the sea that was below the firmament; and that the sea under the firmament covered all the earth until God gathered the waters under the

firmament unto one place and caused the dry land to appear. But if we know anything at all, we know that there is no firmament. God could not have made a firmament, for there is none. He could not have made space on the second day because space is nothing. And according to the story itself, He made the sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day,— the day after He had made grass and fruit trees. When, as a child, I thought that the apparent ceiling of the earth was the floor of heaven, my scientific ideas were no more crude than those of the writer who thought God made a firmament. But if there had been a firmament, as it appeared to the untrained senses, then it would have been made exactly as our inspired writer affirmed; and not after the ridiculous manner of the Babylonian bible. Our author's philosophy and religion in this case were perfect, but his science was wrong. So what is the use of trying to make out that the Bible always harmonizes with science, when it is absolutely certain that it does not?

When in college I asked my professor in geology how the earth could exist and grow grass and fruit trees bearing fruit before the sun was made. He replied that the sun, of course, was made previously, but that it did not appear until the fourth day when the vapor had settled by virtue of the earth's cooling. However, that would leave no creation for the fourth day; and besides, the second chapter of Genesis tells us that there was no vegetation yet because the Lord God had not caused it to rain. According to my professor's explanation it was too wet

to see the sun, and according to the second chapter of Genesis it was too dry to grow grass. The biblical writers were not inspired to write science, but religion. And it is just as certain that they did not know much science as it is certain that they did know much religion. In this story of creation the writer took his crude, yet beautiful, little world and lifted it up into such perfect relation to the Infinite Creative Will that no one has ever been able to improve upon it; and the more we learn, the more certain it appears that we never shall be able to revise his statement of how the world is related to the Divine Will. Besides, the thought is so precious and so fruitful that we have no desire to change it.

A message may be perfectly true while the material used to convey the message may be mixed with error. For instance, I once used an illustration in electricity to make plain a deep spiritual truth, and the evidences were unmistakable that my purpose was realized. However, on the way home my little son said, "Oh, papa, I was awfully ashamed of you to-day, you made a mistake in your electricity." Convinced that I was wrong I said, "It is too bad." Then he tried to comfort me by saying, "Oh, well, I don't suppose that more than two-thirds of the people knew the difference." Nothing could have been more true than the religious idea I was trying to elucidate. Those who did not notice my error in my electricity, in addition to getting the idea, thought the illustration a good one. And while those who did recognize the mistake may have inwardly smiled, yet they too

grasped my meaning equally well. Every one present knew that I was not trying to teach electricity, but religion. In like manner, while recognizing the crude science in the story of creation, we may adore the matchless revelation of God in His relation to the universe.

It is as if I had made something beautiful and ingenious for the people of darkest Africa. At first, they would be afraid of it. Not until they were persuaded that it was made in love would they come forward and cautiously lay their hands upon it. Then as their fear subsided and their appreciation increased they would exclaim, "And devils didn't make it, and it won't hurt us, and you made it for our good!" But after their first curiosity had been sufficiently satisfied, I would touch a spring and awaken new wonder by showing the invention to be different from what they had thought, and ten times more wonderful. And thus, at every new revelation of the gift, their mistaken views would be corrected, and their admiration and love for me would be increased. So, in the story of creation, God presented the world to His children by first telling them that devils did not make it, and that vicious gods do not infest it; but that it all proceeded from His will as a loving gift to them. Though they still thought the universe like that which their unaided senses reported to them, yet the thing of supreme importance was that the loving gift came from a good God who rules over all. Than this revelation, nothing could be truer, nor more calculated to put their hearts at rest from fear. It marked a complete transition

from a polytheistic and immoral conception of the universe to a theistic and ethical conception. Through all the centuries that have followed, this new revelation of God in His relation to the universe has been arousing the noble ambition and commanding the loving obedience of men. As men have studied their good gift from God, a growing scientific knowledge has enabled them from time to time to unlock the mysteries of nature; and behold, their good gift was not a snug little world floating in a sea, as they had thought, but a magnificent solar system flying through space, and pulsating in an infinite sea of ether; and the supposed firmament was but a light effect on particles of dust in the atmosphere, caused by the light as it makes its journey of ninety-three million miles from the sun. And once more devout men exclaimed with awe, "Is this what the good God made for us by the mere fiat of His will?" That God said, "Let there be light: and there was light," was the affirmation of an inspired man who little realized that light travels the distance of eight times around the earth in one second, and yet requires more than four years at that speed to come from the nearest star. Thus science may forever change our conception of the world, and our sense of the Creator's majesty.

Someone may say, "Is not this upsetting our old Bible?" I think it is. But when a friend expostulated, "Pat, don't you know that your stone wall will upset if you build it on that swampy ground?" Pat's reply was, "Faith, it is two feet high and three feet wide, and if

it upsets it will be a foot higher than it was before." It is but truth to say that our old Bible is two or three times higher than it was before modern learning upset it; and may scholars keep on upsetting it as long as they can make God's word stand out clear and strong above all human learning and bigotry and superstition.

2. The story of the garden

When I was a boy, nearly every one grew gourds on his picket fence. And at almost every well there hung a gourd dipper. How many cool and refreshing draughts of water I have taken from gourd dippers I dare not say; but the memory is precious, and I should be delighted to repeat the experience now. No one, however, was ever foolish enough to tell us that after drinking the water we must eat the gourd. Now, the Bible is just full of gourd dippers from one end to the other,— and for this I am pleased.

Let me present one of these gourd dippers. It is the story of the Garden. Here is refreshing and life-sustaining water. It is not in a well, but in a spring that bubbles clear up to the surface. You need neither rope nor bucket,— nothing but the gourd; and a child may help himself. This story is a bit of inspired genius, if ever there was any. My library contains great fat books on ethics, yet I never knew half a dozen men or women in my parishes who had the grit or grace to read one of them through. The mental discipline in reading them is

good for ministers, though the conclusions arrived at in these books are identical with the teachings in this simple story. If the methods of these writers on ethics had been adopted by the biblical writers, very few people would be any the wiser for the Bible. But, from the dear old gourd a child may drink with ease and satisfaction.

This beautiful allegory was true to fact when it put Adam and Eve in a garden. Human beings can live only in a garden; they must have a base of supply in the products of the soil. But what about the forbidden fruit? As a child, I did think it too bad that the Lord put the forbidden fruit in the garden when He must have known that it would cause no end of trouble. However, when I became a man I realized that even God could not make a garden that was fit to live in, without its having forbidden fruit in it. The grave is the only place where there is no forbidden fruit. Recently I spent ten days in our Capital City. And it *is* a beautiful garden, with many things "good for food" and "pleasant to the eyes." During the ten days, Washington was my garden; and the other occupants there made me feel that I was very welcome. But did not they and I know that there were at least a dozen kinds of forbidden fruit that I might not partake of without running the risk of being tarred and feathered? Forbidden fruit is not bad fruit, it is fruit that belongs to some one else, or to us at some future time. It is all ours now, in a way; the wealth, the beauty, and the people are ours within certain limits; and it is this that makes our lives worth living. When,

however, we begin to break up families, or to take anything that belongs exclusively to others, we have eaten the forbidden fruit,— and the curse is upon us. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This is the infallible word of God, spoken to our first parents, to us, and to all mankind. Instead of haggling over the question of swallowing the gourd, we should preach this truth about forbidden fruit until offenders feel their hearts filled with holy fear and wholesome disgust.

Though the story of the forbidden fruit is truly wonderful, yet it is no more wonderful than that which makes the serpent the symbol of temptation. The serpent does not chase its prey like some bellowing hound, but silently awaits the victim's coming. As the serpent lies coiled in the midst of your flowers, so temptation lurks in the heart of some pleasant situation. You may be looking with legitimate pleasure upon some beautiful thing that belongs to your neighbor, and, before you are aware of it, the serpent of covetousness has struck its fangs into you. If, however, the temptation is seen before you are bitten by it, like a serpent, it makes strange circuitous routes as if it were coming and going from every side. It stops to parley. And if it succeeds in entwining itself about you, it crushes you with every part of its sinuous length. In countries that are infested with serpents, the reptiles go everywhere; they even hang from the rafters of dwellings. Just so, temptation may appear anywhere to surprise or to charm you. If you are as good as the Master, temptations will assail you. If like Lincoln you

should climb from a hut to the White House, even there you will be confronted by serpents of monstrous size striving in every possible way to beguile you. He who advocates a walking and a talking snake, does so to the great detriment of God's word. We are in no danger from talking serpents; but we all are in great danger from serpent-like temptations.

This parable and fable of the garden is meant for our edification and safety. As an analysis of temptation, sin, and punishment, for all people and for all times, nothing can surpass this story of the garden. Seeing that it contains such vital thrilling truth, it is a great pity that it has fallen into almost universal neglect. The story has been killed by the credulity of its friends.

3. The Bible stories in general

I now call your attention to the interesting *stories* scattered all through the Bible. The story of the Flood is an example. In a very simple form these stories were told long before they appeared in the Scriptures. And, doubtless, there was a nucleus of truth in them or they never would have been started on their rounds. As they were repeated about the campfires to children and illiterate slaves for generation after generation, everything that failed to interest, naturally, was forgotten. This made them the most tried and interesting of stories. In nothing did the inspired writers show greater wisdom than in making wings of these interesting tales to bear their

spiritual messages afar. If the modern Church could learn the spiritual utility of a folk-story, the Bible would start on a new mission of service; and much of the Bible now neglected could be used with new power. The *value* of the lessons thus heralded in no wise rests upon the historic accuracy of the stories. It is perfectly evident that the story of the Flood involves the same crude conception of the earth as that which we have already described as the ancient and unscientific conception. If we contend for the literalness of this story we shall make its invaluable lessons of no effect for many people. The Tower of Babel is a like case. As a parable, it is a most accurate description of the folly this generation is in great danger of committing. Germany really built her Tower of Babel, and is to-day suffering from a confusion of tongues.

4. The laws of Israel — moral and ceremonial

If we now turn to the laws of Israel, we shall find the same blending of the crude with the sublime. The ten commandments are the noblest possible prohibitions; and they are still needed for many people in the old prohibitive form. Yet Jesus takes even these and transforms them into spiritual affirmations. He shows righteousness to be an inner principle,— a state of heart. "On love hangs all the law and the prophets;" motive is the soul of conduct.

By carefully comparing the Old with the New Testa-

ment we see that the law, moral and ceremonial, was a strong movement in the direction of Christ; but that, from the morals of Abraham and Moses to the morals of Jesus, the way was long and steep. We also see that the journey often deviates from a straight line, and that the road at times is almost obliterated by the drifting sands. It is, therefore, evident that one cannot select just any verse of the Bible and say behold! the perfect word of God. When Jacob reports to his wives that he has been able to cheat the father out of his flocks because the God of his father has been with him, neither Jesus nor the Christian conscience of to-day believes it. In the Old Testament times God was giving His chosen people as much of His law as they could understand. Sometimes the divine truth flashed out with great brightness; at other times, it was much beclouded by ignorance and passion. However, all the light that shines so brightly in the life of Jesus, began shining, with varying degrees of luster, through the prophets and teachers of Israel. It is just because the Scriptures enable us to see the *growth* and the *vicissitudes* of God's advancing light in the souls of men that they are so valuable to us. For this reason we should study all the Scriptures more faithfully, and more intelligently.

The ceremonial law of Israel was their method of teaching reverence and purity. Though it strongly resembled the ceremonial law of their Semitic neighbors, yet it was a more useful method of worship for Israel, at that time, than if it had been farther removed from

the customary worship of the day. When the Israelites fell into idolatry, they worshiped the other gods in much the same way that they worshiped Jehovah; and not essentially different from the manner in which the Canaanites worshiped their gods. But for enlightened peoples, this has long since ceased to be a useful method of worship. Slowly we are learning better methods; but we still have much to learn in the divine art of lifting men's souls to God.

5. The book of Job

Passing by a number of historical books we shall next make a brief study of Job.

I once had an interesting conversation with a middle-aged minister who, though uneducated, was a perfect gentleman. His mind was filled with an elaborate and ingenious scheme of religion falsely drawn from Job, Daniel, Ezekiel, and Revelation. Tons of brain power had been consumed by those who developed the system. Yet a moderate amount of general information would have caused the entire system to fall in ashes. Ministers and Bible workers of this type still abound in astonishing numbers.

In the conversation just referred to, the minister was wildly quoting from Job. At one point I remarked, "But what you are now quoting is not true." "What," said he, "don't you believe the Bible?" "Yes," I replied, "but I do not believe that because, at the end of

the book, God Himself says it is not true. Your motive is good, but it is a mistake to think that you can dive into the Scriptures at random like that, and find God's word."

We must remember that the book of Job is a dramatic poem, cast in the form of a dialogue. Whether or no suffering is a proof of guilt is the bone of contention between Job and his friends; and both positions cannot be true.

The author staged this dialogue on the Ash-Mound, outside the village. After the loss of property and children, Job, all covered with boils, takes a potsherd with which to scrape himself and sits down upon the Ash-Mound. When the news of his misfortune reaches his three friends, they proceed forthwith to visit him. As these old sheiks approach Job, and find him changed beyond recognition, they lift up their voices and weep. They also tear off their mantles and sprinkle dust upon their heads. Seeing that Job is in deep distress, they seat themselves near him and remain there seven solid days and nights without ever speaking a word. Finally, Job opens his mouth and curses the day of his birth, in one of the most pessimistic poems ever recited. Even the comforters can scarcely believe their ears, so shocked are they at Job's blasphemy. Still, they retain a measure of sympathy, for Eliphaz asks with great delicacy:

"If one assays to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved?
But who can withhold himself from speaking?"

You remember, Job, how you instructed others when they were weak and afflicted. "Recall, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent?" Now be a man, take your own medicine, repent of your sins, and God will return your prosperity. But Job only pours out his grief in fresh torrents. This causes Bildad to respond with alacrity:

"How long wilt thou speak these things?
And how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a mighty wind?"

Nevertheless, in spite of Bildad's lengthy rebuke, Job continues to pour out his complaint until Zophar can stand it no longer.

"Should not the multitude of words be answered? You are too full of talk for a righteous man. Your boasting will not silence us. For your mockery we shall make you ashamed." And when Zophar had finished his vehement reproach, Job *was* mad.

"No doubt but ye are the people,
And wisdom shall die with you."

Thus the argument went back and forth with criminations and recriminations, until Job and his friends were exhausted.

While the discussion was raging, there came along a young theologian who, being attracted by the discussion, remained to hear it through. It turned out that the speeches of both Job and his friends were to him equally

disgusting. So he decided to wait and set them all right by his superior wisdom. Though this young man was filled with wrath at what he heard, yet he respectfully waited until the old men had finished. Then he reminded them that it was his respect for age that had kept him still until now. Having expressed his surprise at not finding wisdom associated with years, he takes thirty-three lines to tell them how smart he is; and assures them that they shall hear something worth while when he gets to speaking. Some years ago while reading this with my wife, I could scarcely wait until young Elihu got through boasting; I was thrilled with a desire to hear his new position. At last he began his argument. But, to my great surprise, I could see no difference between his position and that of Job's opponents; and as my wife could see no difference, I was convinced that there was none. Like Job's antagonists, he argued at great length and with much beauty that misfortune is a proof of guilt. Finally, however, he did add a suggestion. Misfortune is a warning not to sin more, lest you suffer more. Of course none of the older men deigned to answer this young upstart by so much as a word.

The argument from all sources now being in, it was time for the artist to prepare a fitting scene for the approach of the Almighty. Consequently, the storm clouds gather and begin to drop rain. The lightning suddenly flashes to the ends of the earth. The quick crash of thunder makes the heart quake. It is such a time as when old leviathan churns the deep into white foam.

And at last out of the awful whirlwind God speaks: "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?"

Stand up, Job, and I will speak with you. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Have you walked in the recesses of the deep, have you seen the gates of death, does the morning come at your bidding, do you know the way of the lightning, do you cause the east wind to scatter over the earth? With all your wisdom, surely, you can answer. Job, "Canst thou bind the cluster of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?" Can you thunder, Job? Can you send forth the lightning, can you draw out old leviathan with a fish hook? Gird up your loins like a man and answer me.

Very meekly Job replies, "Lord, I have heard of you before with the hearing of the ears, but now that I see you with my eyes, I abhor myself in dust and ashes." He frankly admits that he has spoken concerning things too wonderful for him. That Job has talked like a fool, God concedes. Yet He assures Job that in his main contention, he is right. Suffering is not a proof of guilt. Then turning to Job's miserable comforters, God informs them that He is angry because of all the falsehoods they have spoken. Go, therefore, and take seven bullocks and seven rams and offer a sacrifice, and my servant Job shall pray for you. And look sharp, "that I deal not with you after your folly; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath."

After all this, how pitiful it was to see my old friend,

the minister, building up a weird religion on hit-or-miss passages from Job.

We all know that the wicked must suffer sooner or later, but the lesson of Job is that the innocent may suffer also. From this beautiful dramatic poem we learn that when the cause of suffering lies too deep for our knowledge, we should trust the goodness of Him who is All-wise. The false belief, argued so vehemently by Job's comforters, still persisted in the days of Jesus; because they asked Him, "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" And Jesus vindicated the position of Job by saying, "Neither did this man nor his parents sin." The greater pity is, that this false belief still persists to crush the hearts of many innocent sufferers. A saintly parishioner of mine once said to me while wringing her hands:

"Oh, what awful thing can I have done, that God has brought this affliction upon me?" I told her that she had done nothing, that she was a Dorcas among us, and that God loved her as we all did. And thus I comforted her from the teachings of Job, and from the words of Jesus. For three months, until she went home, she lay on a bed of pain in peace and trust.

CHAPTER X

LOSING THE BIBLE TO FIND IT (*continued*)

The method of finding God's Word in the Scriptures illustrated.

1. The Psalms

For richness of spiritual content, for loftiness of expression, and for intimacy of communion with God, no other book in the world equals the Psalms. All devout souls have found the fullest expression of their inmost being in these inspired hymns. Like all true poetry the Psalms deal with the timeless. Eternal truths and deathless passions flow through these beautiful, rhythmic lines like a majestic river. The world is infinitely richer for the Psalms. And though they often reveal mistaken ideas in astronomy, yet religiously and poetically the Psalms contain the finest possible conceptions of the material universe. Even the imprecatory utterances are not wholly immoral, nor altogether contrary to the teachings of Jesus; for when they were deserved, He said things dreadfully severe. But when a Psalmist goes so far as to say of his enemy, "Neither let there be any to have pity on his fatherless children," or "Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the rock," he clearly

manifests an evil spirit; a spirit that is at once contrary to his own religion, and utterly condemned by Jesus. However, when we consider the ruthless exploitation to which Israel was so long exposed, it is most remarkable that the Psalms contain so little of this evil note. Whoever approaches the Psalms in the spirit of the Master will find them fat with spiritual meat.

Notwithstanding all, it is an indisputable fact that the best Christian hymns are superior to the poorest Hebrew Psalms. Take for example Dr. Gladden's hymn:

"O Master, let me walk with Thee
In lowly paths of service free;
Tell me Thy secret, help me bear
The strain of toil, the fret of care.

"Help me the slow of heart to move
By some clear, winning word of love;
Teach me the wayward feet to stay,
And guide them in the homeward way.

"Teach me Thy patience; still with Thee
In closer, dearer company,
In work that keeps faith sweet and strong,
In trust that triumphs over wrong,

"In hope that sends a shining ray
Far down the future's broadening way,
In peace that only Thou canst give,
With Thee, O Master, let me live."

Now, if any one should say that this hymn is inferior to the poorest Psalm, he would simply reveal a biased

mind. And yet, a hundred Dr. Gladdens could not have produced the book of Psalms. The Psalms were not made to order but, like his hymn, grew out of peculiar experiences. The Hebrew Psalms were lived out, and suffered out, through the life of a people that had looked with straining eyes from many a Mount Pisgah, and had lifted a pitiful cry from many a valley of Hinnom. Such experiences get to the heart of things; they offer the great prophetic opportunity for the noble souls through whom God determines the destiny of a people.

What oratorical genius could *invent* a Gettysburg speech? The necessary conditions for such a pronouncement were four years of national anguish, a soil watered by the blood of her noblest sons, and a president bowed down with grief. Then, and only then, could a Mr. Lincoln rise in the midst of our hallowed dead and, all unconsciously, speak words immortal.

In the long ago, our western prairies lifted by mighty volcanic forces were shattered, and twisted, and left with great frowning peaks and deep yawning chasms. As a result, great pockets of gold were deposited in their bosom for the enrichment of the world. In like manner, Israel passed through great national upheavals that resulted in many a precious deposit. And among these deposits were the Psalms that have never ceased to enrich human experience.

What the earth's crust is to the student of nature's forces, that the Scriptures are to the student of spiritual forces.

2. The Prophets in general

If we now turn to the books of the prophets, we shall find a new type of Scripture. These spiritual giants were preëminently men of their own times, with a message for all times.

Before the first of the prophets now under consideration appeared, Israel had already passed through many centuries of deep and varied experience. First the Northern and then the Southern Kingdom became grossly idolatrous and wretchedly corrupt. Their ideals had degenerated into a mere cult, and their social institutions into a rigid system of oppression. Through dishonesty, oppression, and irreligion, the national life had so weakened that its destruction was imminent from inward decay and outward attack. Israel was clearly missing her destiny by forsaking God, oppressing the poor, and by trampling underfoot her most sacred ideals. She was inviting the judgments of God by truly meriting them.

Out of this deepening gloom, the lightning of God's wrath and the thunder of His purpose awakened certain sensitive souls to be prophets and seers in Israel. The realization of the nation's crime and danger transformed these prophets into the most fearless reformers the world had ever seen. As couriers with an important message from God, they went in hot haste to a rebellious and foolish people. Because of the real and immediate danger these preachers were exceedingly intense. To save the day, they strove valiantly. If they were to be successful

in their mission, both vision and oratorical gift were necessary qualifications. Their keen knowledge of Israel's *present* made her future inevitable unless she repented of her sins. The prophets were not sent to proclaim any new religious truths in particular, but to be preachers and reformers of the highest order.

Now, how different all this is from what I used to think.

I once supposed that a prophecy was a pure miracle, a case in which God told the prophet, without any insight on the prophet's part, just what the future would be. It did not occur to me that the prophet had the slightest means of knowing the future which he predicted, except as God miraculously informed him. I also thought that God told the prophets what should be, so that, when it came to pass, it would prove the existence of God and the truth of revealed religion. To my understanding, prophecy was divine fortune-telling, designed to convince religious sceptics of a later day, rather than preaching, designed to save the sinners of that day. I did not realize that the predictions were concerning events inevitable, for the most part, to any one not blinded by sin or ignorance. Nor did I realize that most of their thrilling prophecies were made with the hope of bringing the people to repentance,— in which happy event the predictions would not come true.

A Hebrew prophet rarely used an if. That was understood. He always hoped that his predictions of evil would not come true, because of the *emphatic* manner in which he declared they would. All orientals understood

this, and it would greatly enhance the worth of Scriptures if we understood it equally well.

Too often, however, the evil prophecies did come to pass, because sinful Israel refused to hear. And for the same reason predictions of good often failed. Like true preachers and reformers, the prophets dealt largely in warnings and encouragements; hoping, thereby, to lead the people back to Him who loved them with an everlasting love.

"Do you think this war is a fulfillment of Bible prophecy?" Yes, this war and every other war is a fulfillment of Bible prophecies. Any prophecy that is true to fundamental principles, and true to human nature, goes right on being fulfilled over and over again. The dark prophecies recorded in the Scriptures will never cease being fulfilled until men no longer sin against God and one another. And when men cease sinning against God and their neighbors, the Bible prophecies of *good* will be repeatedly fulfilled throughout all the expanding growth of society. But the fanatical uses made of Bible prophecy in our day, by some well-meaning people, are enough to make angels weep.

The great prophets had their hearts wide open toward the God they adored, toward the nation they loved, and toward the times they feared. They were tremendously inspired of God, and regarded their lives of no account if only they could bring Israel back to God and save her from her enemies without, and her foes within. They were statesmen, seers, and lovers of God and men.

Their souls burned with an unquenchable fire. They were the greatest preachers that the world has ever seen. To learn the historical setting is to enhance the value of their sermons many fold. And to study the prophet's method of impressing truth upon the oriental mind is a marvelous lesson in the art of persuasion. In their effort to save Israel, the prophets partly succeeded and partly failed. But their messages will live forever, and in this they succeeded beyond all precedent. They were firebrands to punish sin, and torches to enlighten the world.

Their messages were simple:

God is infinitely great and good. He loves you with a boundless passion, and pities you with an infinite compassion. But you have trampled on His mercies, you have spurned His approaches, you have jilted Him as a lover, and you show only contempt for His word. You tread down His poor, you rob widows and orphans, you take bribes, you pervert justice, you wallow in vice, you pamper yourselves with stolen delicacies, you mingle freely with the heathen, you copy their vices, you worship their vile gods, and make the land a stench. As a result, Israel languisheth: her poor cry for bread, her young men fall into the vices of their fathers, law and order are forgotten, and a loathsome decay is eating the very heart out of the nation.

Your enemies are quick to see your nakedness and your weakness. Already, they are planning to move against you. And Jehovah is so weary and discouraged

with you that He has about decided to use your mighty enemies as a scourge. He loves you so much that He must save you, at least a remnant of you, even if He has to use your cruel enemies to bring you back to your senses. Anyone who looks can see what is about to happen. If he listens he can hear the tramping of horses' feet and the rumbling of chariot wheels.

In true oriental imagery, these majestic prophets appealed to Israel's fear and pride and honor. There was no human passion overlooked, and no fundamental fact forgotten. They scolded, and wooed. They promised abundant good, or abundant evil. Their fund of *illustrations* was inexhaustible and, for the most part, exceedingly effective with the people of their day; and many of their illustrations are still unsurpassed for beauty and power. Nevertheless, they sometimes allowed their imagination to run riot while devising, or adapting imagery that would attract the attention, and arouse the hopes and the fears of their hearers. A notable instance is that of the captive Ezekiel, when he tries to portray the glory and majesty of Jehovah by means of a monstrous flying machine.

While Ezekiel's motive was good, his method was crude. He pictured a great cloud flashing fire as it rolled out of the north with a stormy wind. In the fiery cloud were living creatures, and each one had four faces and four wings. They also had calves' feet that sparkled like brass. Besides having human hands under their wings these strange objects had a man's face, a lion's face,

an eagle's face, and the face of an ox. Their general apearance was that of burning coals and flaming torches. Connected, somehow, with the cloud and these monstrous creatures were wheels resembling precious stones, and wheels within wheels. And the rims of the wheels were covered with eyes. The movement of this startling apparition was direct, and very terrible; the noise of its wings was like great waters and the voice of the Almighty. Above this flying wonder was a canopy, and above the canopy a throne, from whence there proceeded a voice. Then he saw, as it were, glowing metal and the appearance of a rainbow. This appalling chariot of Jehovah, and the awful majesty of God, threw Ezekiel upon his face. Then Jehovah said unto Ezekiel, "Son of man, stand upon thy feet and I will speak with thee."

Now, we may be sure that the majesty of Jehovah is not less, but infinitely greater than this flying wonder. His glory, however, is decidedly different from this vision. Reverence and awe for the Almighty are sorely needed in every generation, and the effort to inspire them is a most worthy aim. There is no denying but this illustration is an awful picture; one that would thoroughly stupefy a child. But what should we think of a minister to-day who began his sermon with a similar description of the majesty and glory of God? However useful such imagery may have been to exiles in Babylonia more than two thousand years ago, it would be positively harmful to a modern congregation.

Though this vision of Ezekiel is crude and very ex-

treme, even for an ancient prophet of Israel, yet we have people to-day who invest these wheels, and eyes, and heads with symbolic meanings to bolster up a monstrous religion that is contrary to pretty much everything that Jesus taught. Out of the books of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation, some well meaning but untaught souls can invent fifty-seven varieties of religion. But they can learn neither the lesson nor the danger of an undisciplined imagination.

3. Jonah

As I am simply giving a bird's-eye view of the Scriptures, and the method of approaching them, possibly a few words should be said concerning Jonah.

As a great missionary book for a people who were very unmissionary in spirit, Jonah is unique. It breathes the spirit of Christian missions in this twentieth century.

The friends of the Bible have unwittingly made this great book a jest and a byword by their wretched interpretation of it. Even as a little boy, I used to feel ashamed of certain portions of Jonah when read at family prayers. For, as I understood it, there was something about the story uncanny and unreal. I knew that some people scoffed at the fish story. But that did not trouble me because I believed in miracles, and was much pleased that God did not let poor Jonah drown. It was the unnaturalness of Jonah himself that troubled me. And when it came to his experience with the gourd, I almost lost faith. When Jonah felt so angry and sorry that he

wanted to die because a worm bit the gourd, my common sense revolted completely. I meditated over this incident a long time, and finally concluded that no little boy was ever such a fool as that. I had felt faint in the hot sun many times myself and had seen chinch bugs eat up whole fields of wheat, and yet I did not want to die. That a big man, and prophet of God, could give way to such hysterical feelings over a withering gourd was more than I could believe. This incident was a much greater shock to my faith than the fish story. Though I felt very wicked for doubting the Bible, yet I was heartily glad that a certain sceptical neighbor was not present to hear it, for I knew he would make fun of such a story. What a pity it is that a little boy should be compelled to experience such feelings about the Bible at family prayers, when a little rational explanation would make this book charming to him beyond expression.

Though the book of Jonah is written in a curious oriental style that no man of to-day would wish to imitate, yet its spirit, purpose, and subject matter would be very difficult to surpass. As a parable, it is true to the general history of Israel and to the spirit of Christian missions. It contains the vision of a missionary statesman, and was meant to sting Israel to the quick for her bigotry and hardness of heart.

Very briefly stated, it is something like this:

The whining and almost contemptible prophet Jonah is Israel itself. Jonah is a caricature of Israel, and that is what made him seem unreal to me. Israel wanted the

heathen killed, and not converted. And though she did not dare to disobey God outright, yet she gave God the slip at the first corner and embarked on the sea of politics. For a long time Israel had been as anxious to get into politics and form international relations as she had been determined not to be a missionary nation to her despised neighbors. So in this parable, Israel had not been long on the sea of politics when a great storm arose,— it is ever so. And, as usual in politics, someone is thrown overboard. The great fish that swallowed Jonah was Assyria. Therefore it is not strange that Irsael offered a long and beautiful prayer in that kind of a fish's belly. Proud Israel, God's darling, in exile for her rebellion against Jehovah, could do no otherwise than offer up a prayer.

"Out of the belly of Sheol cried I,
And thou heardest my voice.
For thou didst cast me into the depth, in the heart of the seas,
And the flood was round about me;
All thy waves and thy billows passed over me.
And I said I am cast out before thine eyes;
Yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.
The waters compassed me about, even to the soul;
The weeds were wrapped about my head.

"And Jehovah spake unto the fish, (Assyria) and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." And Israel returned from captivity. Israel still showed an aversion for missionary work after her exile, but when God said "Go" a second time, Israel went. That is, she went in

the parable. It is clear, from the sarcasm of the story, that Jonah enjoyed his message when he began crying, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." The parable reveals the faith of the author. He wished to convey the idea that the wicked heathen would repent more quickly than Israel if they had a herald to proclaim God's truth. Of course, a prophecy of destruction would not come true if the heathen repented. So God decided not to do what He said He would.

"But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry." When Jonah, the typical Israelite, saw that his preaching had converted the heathen he was so mad that he wanted to die. I knew how kind-hearted you were toward repentant sinners, and that is the reason I tried to run off the first time. Now, God, just kill me; "for it is better for me to die than to live." Is this history? Yes, it is history in stinging sarcasm. How the Israelites must have writhed under such a portrayal of their faithless and godless hearts. But the author knew that it would take more than this to break their stubborn wills. So he proceeds with a few more sledge-hammer blows.

"And Jehovah said, Doest thou well to be angry?" Now this gave Jonah a little hope that God might kill his despised neighbors even if they had bitterly repented and turned to the Lord for forgiveness. Accordingly, Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side where he could see and gloat over the destruction of his converts, in case the Lord did intend to destroy them after all. In the meantime, Jonah made himself just as comfortable

as possible by constructing a booth where he could sit in the shade. And our satirist causes God to add a little touch of comfort by causing a gourd "to come up over" His darling, "Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to deliver him from his evil case."

Now, the contemptible Jonah had no business being there in the sun; he should have been at home helping his wife, if he had nothing else to do. But better still, he should have been in Nineveh rejoicing with the converts who had been redeemed from destruction by his preaching.

Note the fine sarcasm of our author, "So Jonah was exceedingly glad of the gourd."

However, when the gourd was smitten by a worm, and the sultry wind blew, and the sun shone hot upon his head, our mean little Jonah again asked God to kill him. Now Jonah, "Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?" "Yes, I do well to be angry even unto death." Were ever such words of irony spoken! O Israel, you are smitten with grief because of your poor little gourds, but don't you think you might have a little pity for all those innocent people who were so untaught morally that they did not know their right hand from their left?

It would be well for us to remember that we, as well as ancient Israel, fret and fume over a lot of little nothings. Little griefs and little deprivations vex us sorely. But while our brothers and sisters over much of the earth go naked and starved and diseased, we feel no pity. We are very tender-hearted over little things, we are deeply

moved over some fictitious story; but for the appalling tragedies of dark continents and exploited peoples, our hearts are flint.

Obviously, Israel understood only too well the biting sarcasm and bitter irony of Jonah's ringing satire. If the author of this parable could know that a generation has since risen, with so little historical and literary acumen as to believe that Jonah is literal history, I think his body would turn over in its grave. If he knew that he had set people to wrangling over the question of whether a fish could swallow a man, instead of sending them out as missionaries to all the Ninevehs of the earth, he would feel sorry that he ever wrote the book.

When intelligently understood, there is no other literature extant that makes such a strong moral and religious appeal for social justice and political righteousness as the prophets. The writings of the great prophets of Israel constitute a practical *sociology,* founded on the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man; a sociology so enriched by a wealth of historical materials as to make it a treasure-house for all workers in social betterment.

To save the ordinary Bible reader from confusion, I have purposely avoided all questions of origin and composite character, along with many other interesting and useful facts concerning the Scriptures. This simple approach to the Scriptures is for the purpose of helping the average person to find the soul of the Bible. For it is

the soul of the Bible, and not its incidental features, that enriches the soul of the reader.

4. The New Testament in general

In the New, as well as in the Old Testament, the letter kills while the spirit makes alive.

As the historical and literary methods of study have imparted a new beauty and a new significance to the messages of the Old Testament, the same methods will, in like manner, affect the messages of the New Testament.

The personal Christ is the *soul* of the New Testament. In Jesus, righteousness is more than a decalogue or a catalogue to be followed; it is a character to be possessed. In Jesus, God is more than a Divinity to be obeyed; the Infinite Will is an indwelling Spirit,— the soul of man's soul. While the Old Testament never recognizes God as dwelling in man, the New Testament takes the God of Israel and the righteousness of Israel and places them in human life; not as a theory, but as personal experience. This is the old righteousness and the old religion made new.

When we say that Jesus is the soul of the New Testament, we have no reference to perplexing questions about how He came or how He went. We mean that the God-filled Jesus is the soul of all the New Testament teachings. The pure, strong Son of God is the lodestone of the Gospels and the Epistles. It is He that draws honest souls

into divine fellowship with the Father and His family. To see the character of Jesus in its most lovely aspects, and to feel His love that heals and transforms, is to receive the very best that the New Testament has to give.

The perplexing questions of psychology, of tradition, of manuscripts, and of miracles are interesting enough for those who are equipped to study them; but all these are much less than the one essential thing. To know Him, and to feel the power that He can exercise over all that are attached to Him in love and service, is life eternal. Granting that the miracles are true, yet it is infinitely more difficult to be certain of the truth of a miracle than it is to be certain of the truth of the Christian religion. The Christian religion may be tested at first hand. We can taste and see that the Lord is good. By keeping company with Jesus, and walking in His footsteps, we are able to decide for ourselves whether we care for Him and His way of living. Though one were in utter doubt concerning everything else, if he saw in Jesus something so much to be desired that he was willing to forsake all and follow Him, he would find himself in loving fellowship with the Father. "Whosoever will, let him come." And, "Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Though in doubt about every question of scholarship, the one who personally tests the life and teachings of Jesus from day to day is able to answer, "One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see." To find one's self sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, after living among

the tombs as one mad for wealth or pleasure or popularity, is the last word in religion.

Having thus blazed the straight path to God, let me urge it upon my readers that they take up the broader and deeper study of the New Testament literature as they have opportunity. For, in so doing they will broaden and deepen their lives, and better fit themselves to live in society as those who helpfully and intelligently serve.

But some may say, "How are we to know that our religion is true unless we have some ancient, miraculous proof!"

My answer is that in nothing does God so much delight, as in making Himself known to those who intelligently receive Him in pure hearts. When God is *here,* even if it were possible, we do not need to prove His existence; we simply need to get acquainted with Him. Miracles may have been necessary in times past; if so, they served their purpose when they were needed. Since it is harder to verify an ancient miracle than it is to verify the presence of God in our own hearts, we cling to the greater certainty without being too dogmatic concerning the wonders reported in a primitive age. If one believes in miracles, no one can prove that he is wrong. If he is so constituted that he cannot believe in them, God will not turn him away if he follows the Master with his whole heart. If any one desires a richer assurance of God and His forgiveness, let him be a more intelligent and a better Christian; let him make a larger investment of himself in the service of God. I have

nothing to say against miracles; but I should like to testify that it has been possible to lead many to Christ by getting them to become His disciples first, and then letting them have plenty of time to settle the question of miracles as best they were able.

Though I bring an indictment against myself, I must say, what we most need is a ministry with Apostolic faith and fervor. We need St. Pauls and St. Johns. We need leaders who can make God real and sin hateful.

5. The book of Revelation

Seeing that so many good Christians are perplexed by the apocalypses, we shall close this chapter with a brief study of the book of Revelation.

The mystery that once shrouded the book of Revelation is gone. As Professor Porter says, "The historical method has, it is not too much to say, broken the seals. To the historical student these apocalypses have become, in their general character and chief messages, among the best instead of quite the least understood books of the canon. And their importance has grown with their understanding."

The book of Revelation throws more light on the past than on the future. It has to do largely with a crisis in the early Christian Church, and not with the end of the world and the "constitution of the unseen universe."

The probable date of the book is about ninety-three A. D. The great Christian leaders were gone, the

heathen elements were entering the Church with their traditions and rites, and the Roman government was setting up emperor worship to strengthen the loyalty of diverse populations. The mandate that all should enter the temples of the emperor and worship him as divine was particularly hard on Jews and Christians who refused to worship any but the one true God. The persecutions that followed a refusal to worship the emperor, with all the other devitalizing influences mentioned, threatened the very existence of the Christian Church.

It was to meet this crisis that the book of Revelation was written. And this accounts for the poetical and visionary style adopted by the author. Strong language was needed; something that would quicken the imagination and revive the fainting hearts of those who were growing cold and indifferent. Dynamite was needed. No gentle utterance would suffice. The writer realizes the awful conflict that is about to ensue between the gentle Lamb and His humble followers on the one side, and the great dragon, Rome, and his vile cohorts on the other. Somehow, the Christians must be convinced that the Lamb will finally triumph over the beast, or all is lost. After the sweet, simple letters of admonition and praise to the Churches, in which he pictures Christ among the candlesticks, the task of reassuring the persecuted followers of Jesus must somehow be achieved. So he goes to his task as a fireman goes to the work of saving a building that is on fire. Ordinary means will utterly fail. He first looks to the heavens, and then to the most

striking imagery of the Old Testament, and never refuses a striking figure from any source that promises to serve his purpose. He gathers from far and near anything that will startle and encourage. As the winds drive the clouds until their blackness terrifies, so he gives free rein to his own imagination while marshaling his material. He commands the heavenly trumpeters, and brings forth appalling horsemen riding in the heavens. He sees one-third of the sun, moon, and stars, smitten after the blast of a heavenly trumpet. He sees an angel open a pit from which belches forth smoke that darkens the whole heavens. Out of the smoke come forth locusts that look like horses prepared for war. They have golden crowns on their heads, and men's faces, and women's hair, and lion's teeth, and breastplates of iron. Their wings sound like chariots and many horses rushing to war. And they have scorpions' tails with stings, to sting the men that have not the seal of God on their foreheads. He assures the poor sufferers that sealed mysteries, and distresses, and woes await them; but that Christ shall be able to solve all mysteries, and that he will command all powers in heaven and earth to fight on their side until the old dragon, whose earthly embodiment is Rome, shall be cast into the sulphurous pit and sealed. Finally, in the most beautiful and poetical fashion he declares that the battle shall be won, the clash of arms and the blare of trumpets shall cease, heaven and earth shall be cleared of their fierce combatants, and in that happy and peaceful hour the reward of the faithful shall ap-

pear. Heaven shall descend on a new earth that is redeemed. The Lamb and His bride, the faithful Church, shall again be united. And this new heaven on earth shall be inexpressibly beautiful; the architecture shall be symmetrical, and richly adorned. The gates of the city shall be pearls, and the streets gold. The city shall not, as the old Jerusalem, be built of common stone; even the foundations shall be adorned with jasper, and sapphire, and chalcedony, and emerald, and sardonyx, and sardius, and chrysolite, and beryl, and topaz, and chrysoprase, the jacinth, and amethyst. There shall be a river, and trees bearing fruit for food and leaves for healing. All these things the writer assures them shall soon come to pass. In the great day of victory throngs of people shall be there, arrayed in white; all, both the living and the dead, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, shall be present. They shall be invited to the marriage of the Lamb, and to the wonderful feast that will follow.

We are justified in believing that this poetical and highly imaginative portrayal of the conflict was very effective with the humble, illiterate, and sorely persecuted people who constituted the Christian Church at that time. They revived from their coldness, they turned their backs upon the insidious temptations and allurements of the heathen world, and went in armies to the martyr's death. Rome was conquered, but not in the way the author expected. Rome was conquered by being made Christian, at least nominally and politically. The histories that

record the conflict between the Christians and Rome are not less blood-curdling than the book of Revelation. The conflict was frightful, only it was in terms of blood, and fire, and dungeon. If the ingenious and infernal methods of torture, invented by Rome, present a picture difficult to read, what must the reality have been to bear? We should never cease to thank God that these humble Christians were nerved for the conflict. The modern world owes these martyrs a debt of gratitude as high as the heavens and as deep as the seas. When we consider the people, the times, and the crisis, the book of Revelation was a means well suited to a noble end. Who can look upon such a scene, and witness such heroism, and read such desperate utterances rising out of the conflict as are recorded by the author of Revelation without wishing to be a better man, and a more loyal follower of the one who still stands among the candlesticks,— His Churches. Sabatier has wisely said, "Apocalypses do not reveal to us the secrets of the divine providence, but do reveal the optimistic believing nature of the soul."

During the recent war, many portions of our country were burnt over with the fanaticism that has sprung from a false and unhistorical interpretation of Revelation and other apocalyptic writings.

The following extract from Professor Porter's book, "Daniel and Revelation," is of special interest:

"The more theoretical or theological messages of the apocalypses it is evidently impossible for us to accept in any literal way as a message for our day. That which

they claimed to do, namely, to unveil the heavenly world and the future age, they really did not do. We cannot accept their descriptions of heaven, of God's throne, or of the angels, their names and functions, as a revelation of hidden realities. They are at most figurative and imaginative representations or symbols of faith in God and a spiritual realm. We are interested in these things only, on the one side, for the imperishable faith and hope behind them, and on the other for their place in the history of human speculation and fancy. . . . Although we cannot receive their theoretical message, yet their practical message for their own time is a true message for all like times, and in a measure for all times alike. Religious faith in times of a dominating, aggressive, or insinuating worldliness needs to maintain itself by the assurance of the real dominion of the unseen world over the world of sense, and by the hope of some approaching manifestation of God, some open demonstration of the rule of justice and goodness. The apocalyptical temper is needed when religion is assailed and in danger; and in all times the religious life needs to maintain its purity and strength by some sort of protest against the world, some defiance of ruling ideals and customs, some faith in realities above those of sense, and in truths contrary to appearances. The greater apocalypses were inspired by a living faith in the ideal and an eager expectation of its coming into reality; and faith in ideals which the world contradicts is too rare and precious a thing to be despised because its form is strange."

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